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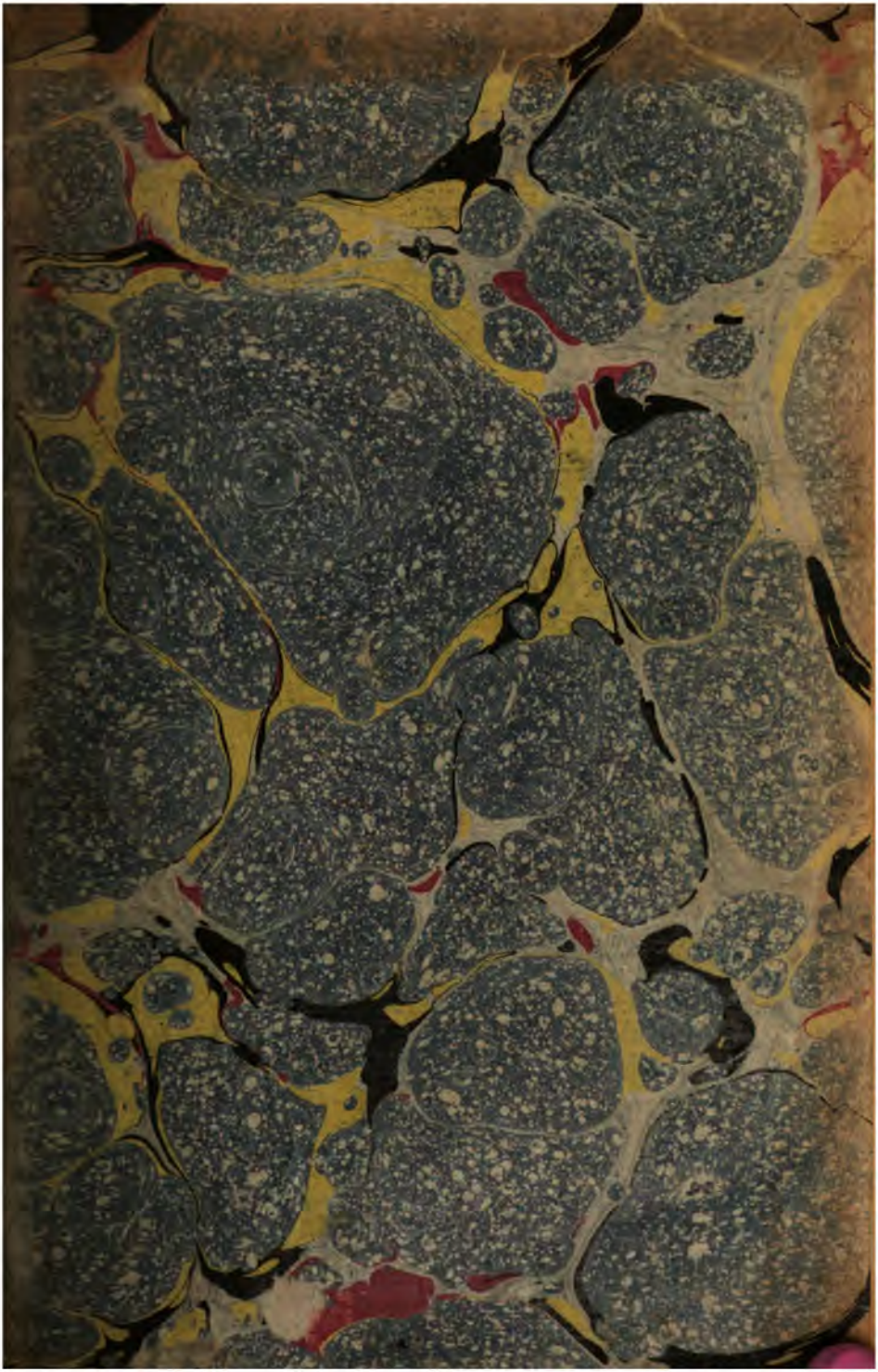

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THE

WORKS

OF

PRESIDENT EDWARDS,

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOLUME III.

CONTAINING

I. A NARRATIVE OF MANY SURPRISING CONVERSIONS.
II. THOUGHTS ON THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN NEWENGLAND.
III. AN HUMBLE ATTEMPT TO PROMOTE EXPLICIT AGREEMENT IN PRAYER.
IV. LIFE OF REV. D. BRAINERD AND REFLECTIONS UPON IT.

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NARRATIVE

OF

SURPRISING CONVERSIONS.

TO THE REV. DR. COLMAN.

Reverend and Honored Sir,

HAVING seen your letter to my honored uncle Williams, of Hatfield, of July 20, wherein you inform him of the notice that has been taken of the late wonderful work of God in this, and some other towns in this county, by the Rev. Dr. Watts and Dr. Guyse of London, and the congregation to which the last of these preached on a monthly day of solemn prayer; as also of your desire to be more perfectly acquainted with it, by some of us on the spot: And having been since informed by my uncle Williams, that you desire me to undertake it; I would now do it in as just and faithful a manner as in me lies.

The people of the county in general, I suppose are as sober, and orderly, and good sort ofpeople, as in any part of Newengland; and I believe they have been preserved the freest by far, of any part of the country from error, and variety of sects and opinions. Our being so far within the land, at a distance from seaports, and in a corner of the country, has doubtless been one reason why we have not been so much corrupted with vice, as most other parts. But without question the religion, and good order of the country, and their purity in doctrine, has, under God, been very much owing to the great abilities, and eminent piety, of my venerable and honored

grandfather Stoddard. I suppose we have been the freest of any part of the land from unhappy divisions, and quarrels in our ecclesiastical and religious affairs, till the late lamentable Springfield contention.*

We being much separated from other parts of the province, and having comparatively but little intercourse with them, have from the beginning, till now, always managed our ecclesiastical affairs within ourselves; it is the way in which the country, from its infancy, has gone on by the practical agreement of all, and the way in which our peace and good order has hitherto been maintained.

The town of Northampton is of about eightytwo years standing, and has now about two hundred families; which mostly dwell more compactly together than any town of such a bigness in these parts of the country; which probably has been an occasion that both our corruptions and reformations have been, from time to time, the more swiftly propagated, from one to another, through the town. Take the town in general, and so far as I can judge, they are as rational and understanding a people as most I have been acquainted with: Many of them have been noted for religion, and particularly, have been remarkable for their distinct knowledge in things that relate to heart religion, and Christian experience, and their great regards thereto.

I am the third minister that has been settled in the town: The Reverend Mr. Eleazar Mather, who was the first, was ordained in July 1669. He was one whose heart was much in his work, abundant in labors for the good of precious souls; he had the high esteem and great love of his people, and was blessed with no small success. The Rev. Mr. Stoddard who succeeded him, came first to the town the November after his death, but was not ordained till September 11, 1672, and died February 11, 1728-9. So that he continued in the work of the ministry here from his first coming to town, near sixty

* The Springfield contention relates to the settlement of a Minister there, which occasioned too warm debates between some, both pastors and people that were for it, and others that were against it, on account of their different apprehensions about his principles, and about some steps that were taken to procure his ordination.

years. And as he was eminent and renowned for his gifts and grace; so he was blessed, from the beginning, with extraordinary success in his ministry, in the conversion of many souls. He had five harvests as he called them: The first was about fiftyseven years ago; the second about fiftythree years; the third about forty; the fourth about twentyfour; the fifth and last about eighteen years ago. Some of these times were much more remarkable than others, and the ingathering of souls more plentiful. Those that were about fiftythree, and forty, and twentyfour years ago, were much greater than either the first or the last: But in each of them, I have heard my grandfather say, the greater part of the young people in the town, seemed to be mainly concerned for their eternal salvation.

After the last of these, came a far more degenerate time, (at least among young people) I suppose, than ever before. Mr. Stoddard, indeed, had the comfort before he died, of seeing a time when there was no small appearance of a divine work amongst some, and a considerable ingathering of souls, even after I was settled with him in the ministry, which was about two years before his death; and I have reason to bless God for the great advantage I had by it. In these two years there were near twenty that Mr. Stoddard hoped to be savingly converted; but there was nothing of any general awakening. The greater part seemed to be at that time very insensible of the things of religion, and engaged in other cares and pursuits. Just after my grandfather's death, it seemed to be a time of extraordinary dullness in religion: Licentiousness for some years greatly prevailed among the youth of the town; they were many of them very much addicted to night walking, and frequenting the tavern, and lewd practices, wherein some by their example exceedingly corrupted others. It was their manner very frequently to get together in conventions of both sexes, for mirth and jollity, which they called frolics; and they would often spend the greater part of the night in them, without any regard to order in the families they belonged to: And indeed family government did too much fail in the town. It was become very customary with many of our young people to be

indecent in their carriage at meeting, which doubtless would not have prevailed to such a degree, had it not been that my grandfather, through his great age, (though he retained his powers surprisingly to the last) was not so able to observe them. There had also long prevailed in the town a spirit of contention between two parties, into which they had for many years been divided, by which was maintained a jealousy one of the other, and they were prepared to oppose one another in all public affairs.

But in two or three years after Mr. Stoddard's death, there began to be a sensible amendment of these evils; the young people shewed more of a disposition to hearken to counsel, and by degrees left off their frolicing, and grew observably more decent in their attendance on the public worship, and there were more that manifested a religious concern than there used to be.

At the latter end of the year 1733, there appeared a very unusual flexibleness, and yielding to advice, in our young people. It had been too long their manner to make the evening after the sabbath,* and after our public lecture, to be especially the times of their mirth, and company keeping. But a sermon was now preached on the sabbath before the lecture, to shew the evil tendency of the practice, and to persuade them to reform it; and it was urged on heads of families, that it should be a thing agreed upon among them, to govern their families, and keep their children at home, at these times;....and withal it was more privately moved, that they should meet together the next day, in their several neighborhoods, to know each other's minds: Which was accordingly done, and the motion complied with throughout the town. But parents found little or no occasion for the exercise of government in the case; the young people declared themselves convinced by what they had heard from the pulpit, and were willing of themselves to comply with the counsel that had been given: And it was immediately, and, I suppose, almost universally compli-

* It must be noted, that it has never been our manner to observe the evening that follows the sabbath, but that which precedes it, as part of holy time.

ed with; and there was a thorough reformation of these disorders thenceforward, which has continued ever since.

Presently after this, there began to appear a remarkable religious concern at a little village belonging to the congregation, called Pascommuck, where a few families were settled, at about three miles distance from the main body of the town. At this place a number of persons seemed to be savingly wrought upon. In the April following, Anno 1734, there happened a very sudden and awful death of a young man in the bloom of his youth; who being violently seized with a pleurisy, and taken immediately very delirious, died in about two days; which (together with what was preached publicly on that occasion) much affected many young people. This was followed with another death of a young married woman, who had been considerably exercised in mind, about the salvation of her soul, before she was ill, and was in great distress, in the beginning of her illness; but seemed to have satisfying evidences of God's saving mercy to her, before her death; so that she died very full of comfort, in a most earnest and moving manner, warning and counselling others. This seemed much to contribute to the solemnizing of the spirits of many young persons; and there began evidently to appear more of a religious concern on people's minds.

In the fall of the year, I proposed it to the young people, that they should agree among themselves to spend the evenings after lectures, in social religion, and to that end to divide themselves into several companies to meet in various parts of the town; which was accordingly done, and those meetings have been since continued, and the example imitated by elder people. This was followed with the death of an elderly person, which was attended with many unusual circumstances, by which many were much moved and affected.

About this time began the great noise that was in this part of the country, about Arminianism, which seemed to appear with a very threatening aspect upon the interest of religion here. The friends of vital piety trembled for fear of the issue; but it seemed, contrary to their fear, strongly to be overruled for the promoting of religion. Many who looked on themselves

as in a Christless condition seemed to be awakened by it, with fear that God was about to withdraw from the land, and that we should be given up to heterodoxy, and corrupt principles; and that then their opportunity for obtaining salvation would be past; and many who were brought a little to doubt about the truth of the doctrines they had hitherto been taught, seemed to have a kind of a trembling fear with their doubts, lest they should be led into bypaths, to their eternal undoing: And they seemed with much concern and engagedness of mind to inquire what was indeed the way in which they must come to be accepted with God. There were then some things said publicly on that occasion, concerning justification by faith alone.

Although great fault was found with meddling with the controversy in the pulpit, by such a person, at that time, and though it was ridiculed by many elsewhere; yet it proved a word spoken in season here; and was most evidently attended with a very remarkable blessing of heaven to the souls of the people in this town. They received thence a general satisfaction with respect to the main thing in question, which they had in trembling doubts and concern about; and their minds were engaged the more earnestly to seek that they might come to be accepted of God, and saved in the way of the gospel, which had been made evident to them to be the true and only way. And then it was, in the latter part of December, that the spirit of God began extraordinarily to set in, and wonderfully to work amongst us; and there were, very suddenly, one after another, five or six persons, who were, to all appearance, savingly converted, and some of them wrought upon in a very remarkable manner.

Particularly, I was surprised with the relation of a young woman, who had been one of the greatest company keepers in the whole town: When she came to me, I had never heard that she was become in any wise serious, but by the conversation I then had with her, it appeared to me, that what she gave an account of, was a glorious work of God's infinite power and sovereign grace; and that God had given her a new heart, truly broken and sanctified. I could not then doubt of

it; and have seen much in my acquaintance with her since to confirm it.

Though the work was glorious, yet I was filled with concern about the effect it might have upon others: I was ready to conclude (though too rashly) that some would be hardened by it, in carelessness and looseness of life; and would take occasion from it to open their mouths, in reproaches of religion. But the event was the reverse, to a wonderful degree; God made it, I suppose, the greatest occasion of awakening to others, of any thing that ever came to pass in the town. I have had abundant opportunity to know the effect it had, by my private conversation with many. The news of it seemed to be almost like a flash of lightning, upon the hearts of young people, all over the town, and upon many others. Those persons amongst us, who used to be farthest from seriousness, and that I most feared would make an ill improvement of it, seemed greatly to be awakened with it; many went to talk with her, concerning what she had met with; and what appeared in her seemed to be to the satisfaction of all that did so.

Presently upon this, a great and earnest concern about the great things of religion, and the eternal world, became universal in all parts of the town, and among persons of all degrees, and all ages; the noise amongst the dry bones waxed louder and louder: All other talk but about spiritual and eternal things was soon thrown by; all the conversation in all companies, and upon all occasions, was upon these things only, unless so much as was necessary for people carrying on their ordinary secular business. Other discourse than of the things of religion, would scarcely be tolerated in any company. The minds of people were wonderfully taken off from the world; it was treated amongst us as a thing of very little consequence: They seemed to follow their worldly business, more as a part of their duty, than from any disposition they had to it; the temptation now seemed to lie on that hand, to neglect worldly affairs too much, and to spend too much time in the immediate exercise of religion: Which thing was exceedingly misrepresented by reports that were spread in distant parts of the land,

as though the people here had wholly thrown by all worldly business, and betook themselves entirely to reading and praying, and such like religious exercises.

But though the people did not ordinarily neglect their worldly business, yet there then was the reverse of what commonly is: Religion was with all sorts the great concern, and the world was a thing only by the bye. The only thing in their view was to get the kingdom of heaven, and every one appeared pressing into it: The engagedness of their hearts in this great concern could not be hid; it appeared in their very countenances. It then was a dreadful thing amongst us to lie out of Christ, in danger every day of dropping into hell; and what persons, minds were intent upon was to escape for their lives, and to *fly from the wrath to come*. All would eagerly lay hold of opportunities for their souls; and were wont very often to meet together in private houses for religious purposes: And such meetings, when appointed, were wont greatly to be thronged.

There was scarcely a single person in the town, either old or young, that was left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world. Those that were wont to be the vainest, and loosest, and those that had been most disposed to think and speak slightly of vital and experimental religion, were now generally subject to great awakenings. And the work of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing manner, and increased more and more; souls did, as it were, come by flocks to Jesus Christ. From day to day, for many months together, might be seen evident instances of sinners brought *out of darkness into marvellous light*, and delivered *out of an horrible pit, and from the miry clay, and set upon a rock* with a *new song of praise to God in their mouths*.

This work of God, as it was carried on, and the number of true saints multiplied, soon made a glorious alteration in the town; so that in the spring and summer following, Anno 1735, the town seemed to be full of the presence of God: It never was so full of love, nor so full of joy; and yet so full of distress as it was then. There were remarkable tokens of God's presence in almost every house. It was a time of joy in families

on the account of salvation's being brought unto them; parents rejoicing over their children as new born, and husbands over their wives, and wives overtheir husbands. *The goings of God were then seen in his sanctuary, God's day was a delight, and his tabernacles were amiable.* Our public assemblies were then beautiful; the congregation was alive in God's service, every one earnestly intent on the public worship, every hearer eager to drink in the words of the minister as they came from his mouth; the assembly in general were, from time to time, in tears while the word was preached; some weeping with sorrow and distress, others with joy and love, others with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbors.

Our public praises were then greatly enlivened; God was then served in our psalmody, in some measure, in the beauty of holiness. It has been observable, that there has been scarce any part of divine worship, wherein good men amongst us have had grace so drawn forth, and their hearts so lifted up in the ways of God, as in singing his praises: Our congregation excelled all that ever I knew in the external part of the duty before, the men generally carrying regularly, and well, three parts of music, and the women a part by themselves: But now they were evidently wont to sing with unusual elevation of heart and voice, which made the duty pleasant indeed.

In all companies, on other days, on whatever occasions persons met together, Christ was to be heard of, and seen in the midst of them. Our young people, when they met, were wont to spend the time in talking of the excellency and dying love of Jesus Christ, the gloriousness of the way of salvation, the wonderful, free, and sovereign grace of God, his glorious work in the conversion of a soul, the truth and certainty of the great things of God's word, the sweetness of the views of his perfections, &c. And even at weddings, which formerly were merely occasions of mirth and jollity, there was now no discourse of any thing but the things of religion, and no appearance of any but spiritual mirth.

Those amongst us that had been formerly converted, were greatly enlivened and renewed with fresh and extraordinary incomes of the spirit of God; though some much more than

others, according to the measure of the gift of Christ: Many that before had labored under difficulties about their own state, had now their doubts removed by more satisfying experience, and more clear discoveries of God's love.

When this work of God first appeared, and was so extraordinarily carried on amongst us in the winter, others round about us, seemed not to know what to make of it; and there were many that scoffed at, and ridiculed it; and some compared what we called conversion to certain distempers. But it was very observable of many, that occasionally came amongst us from abroad, with disregardful hearts, that what they saw here cured them of such a temper of mind: Strangers were generally surprised to find things so much beyond what they had heard, and were wont to tell others that the state of the town could not be conceived of by those that had not seen it. The notice that was taken of it by the people that came to town on occasion of the court, that sat here in the beginning of March, was very observable. And those that came from the neighborhood to our public lectures, were for the most part remarkably affected. Many that came to town, on one occasion or other, had their consciences smitten, and awakened, and went home with wounded hearts, and with those impressions that never wore off till they had hopefully a saving issue; and those that before had serious thoughts, had their awakenings and convictions greatly increased. And there were many instances of persons that came from abroad, on visits, or on business, that had not been long here before, to all appearance, they were savingly wrought upon, and partook of that shower of divine blessing that God rained down here, and went home rejoicing; till at length the same work began evidently to appear and prevail in several other towns in the county.

In the month of March, the people in South Hadley began to be seized with deep concern about the things of religion; which very soon became universal: And the work of God has been very wonderful there; not much, if any thing, short of what it has been here, in proportion to the bigness of the place. About the same time it began to break forth in the

west part of Suffield, (where it has also been very great) and it soon spread into all parts of the town. It next appeared at Sunderland, and soon overspread the town; and I believe was for a season, not less remarkable than it was here. About the same time it began to appear in a part of Deerfield, called Green River, and afterwards filled the town, and there has been a glorious work there: It began also to be manifest in the south part of Hatfield, in a place called the Hill, and after that the whole town, in the second week in April, seemed to be seized, as it were at once, with concern about the things of religion; and the work of God has been great there. There has been also a very general awakening at West Springfield, and Long Meadow; and in Enfield, there was, for a time, a pretty general concern amongst some that before had been very loose persons. About the same time that this appeared at Enfield, the Rev. Mr. Bull of Westfield informed me, that there had been a great alteration there, and that more had been done in one week there than in seven years before..... Something of this work likewise appeared in the first precinct in Springfield, principally in the north and south extremes of the parish. And in Hadley old town, there gradually appeared so much of a work of God on souls, as at another time would have been thought worthy of much notice. For a short time there was also a very great and general concern, of the like nature, at Northfield. And wherever this concern appeared, it seemed not to be in vain: But in every place God brought saving blessings with him, and his word attended with his spirit (as we have all reason to think) returned not void. It might well be said at that time in all parts of the county, *Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows?*

As what other towns heard of and found in this, was a great means of awakening them; so our hearing of such a swift, and extraordinary propagation, and extent of this work, did doubtless, for a time, serve to uphold the work amongst us. The continual news kept alive the talk of religion, and did greatly quicken and rejoice the hearts of God's people, and much awakened those that looked on themselves as still left

behind, and made them the more earnest that they also might share in the great blessing that others had obtained.

This remarkable pouring out of the spirit of God, which thus extended from one end to the other of this county, was not confined to it, but many places in Connecticut have partook in the same mercy: As for instance, the first parish in Windsor, under the pastoral care of the Reverend Mr. Marsh, was thus blest about the same time, as we in Northampton, while we had no knowledge of each other's circumstances: There has been a very great ingathering of souls to Christ in that place, and something considerable of the same work began afterwards in East Windsor, my honored father's parish, which has in times past been a place favored with mercies of this nature, above any on this western side of New England, excepting Northampton; there having been four or five seasons of the pouring out of the spirit to the general awakening of the people there, since my father's settlement amongst them.

There was also the last spring and summer a wonderful work of God carried on at Coventry, under the ministry of the Reverend Mr. Meacham: I had opportunity to converse with some of the Coventry people, who gave me a very remarkable account of the surprising change that appeared in the most rude and vicious persons there. The like was also very great at the same time in a part of Lebanon, called the Crank, where the Reverend Mr. Wheelock, a young gentleman, is lately settled: And there has been much of the same at Durham, under the ministry of the Reverend Mr. Chauncey; and to appearance no small ingathering of souls there. And likewise amongst many of the young people in the first precinct in Stratford, under the ministry of the Reverend Mr. Gould; where the work was much promoted by the remarkable conversion of a young woman that had been a great company keeper, as it was here.

Something of this work appeared in several other towns in those parts, as I was informed when I was there the last fall. And we have since been acquainted with something very remarkable of this nature at another parish in Stratford, called

Ripton, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Mills. And there was a considerable revival of religion last summer at New Haven old town, as I was once and again informed by the Rev. Mr. Noyes, the minister there, and by others: And by a letter which I very lately received from Mr. Noyes, and also by information we have had otherwise. This flourishing of religion still continues, and has lately much increased: Mr. Noyes writes, that many this summer have been added to the church, and particularly mentions several young persons that belong to the principal families of that town.

There has been a degree of the same work at a part of Guilford; and very considerable at Mansfield, under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Eleazar Williams; and an unusual religious concern at Tolland; and something of it at Hebron, and Bolton. There was also no small effusion of the spirit of God in the north parish in Preston in the eastern part of Connecticut, which I was informed of, and saw something of it when I was the last autumn at the house, and in the congregation of the Rev. Mr. Lord, the minister there; who with the Rev. Mr. Owen of Groton, came up hither in May, the last year, on purpose to see the work of God here; and having heard various and contradictory accounts of it, were careful when they were here to inform and satisfy themselves; and to that end particularly conversed with many of our people; which they declared to be entirely to their satisfaction; and that the one half had not been told them, nor could be told them. Mr. Lord told me, that, when he got home, he informed his congregation of what he had seen, and that they were greatly affected with it, and that it proved the beginning of the same work amongst them, which prevailed till there was a general awakening, and many instances of persons, who seemed to be remarkably converted. I also have lately heard that there has been something of the same work at Woodbury.

But this shower of Divine blessing has been yet more extensive: There was no small degree of it in some parts of the Jerseys; as I was informed when I was at New York, (in a long journey I took at that time of the year for my health) by some people of the Jerseys, whom I saw: Especially the

Rev. Mr. William Tennent, a minister, who seemed to have such things much at heart, told me of a very great awakening of many in a place called the Mountains, under the ministry of one Mr. Cross; and of a very considerable revival of religion in another place under the ministry of his brother the Rev. Mr. Gilbert Tennent; and also at another place, under the ministry of a very pious young gentleman, a Dutch minister, whose name as I remember, was Freelinghousen.

This seems to have been a very extraordinary dispensation of Providence: God has in many respects, gone out of, and much beyond his usual and ordinary way. The work in this town, and some others about us, has been extraordinary on account of the universality of it, affecting all sorts, sober and vicious, high and low, rich and poor, wise and unwise; it reached the most considerable families and persons to all appearance, as much as others. In former stirrings of this nature, the bulk of the young people have been greatly affected; but old men and little children have been so now. Many of the last have, of their own accord, formed themselves into religious societies, in different parts of the town: A loose careless person could scarcely find a companion in the whole neighborhood; and if there was any one that seemed to remain senseless or unconcerned, it would be spoken of as a strange thing.

This dispensation has also appeared extraordinary in the numbers of those, on whom we have reason to hope it has had a saving effect: We have about six hundred and twenty communicants which include almost all our adult persons. The church was very large before; but persons never thronged into it, as they did in the late extraordinary time. Our sacraments were eight weeks asunder, and I received into our communion about an hundred before one sacrament, and fourscore of them at one time, whose appearance, when they presented themselves together to make an open explicit profession of Christianity, was very affecting to the congregation: I took in near sixty before the next sacrament day: And I had very sufficient evidence of the conversion of their souls, through divine grace, though it is not the custom here, as it

is in many other churches in this country, to make a credible relation of their inward experiences, the ground of admission to the Lord's Supper.

I am far from pretending to be able to determine how many have lately been the subjects of such mercy; but if I may be allowed to declare any thing that appears to me probable in a thing of this nature, I hope that more than three hundred souls were savingly brought home to Christ in this town, in the space of half a year, (how many more I don't guess) and about the same number of males as females; which, by what I have heard Mr. Stoddard say, was far from what has been usual in years past, for he observed that in his time, many more women were converted than men. Those of our young people that are on other accounts most likely and considerable, are mostly, as I hope, truly pious, and leading persons in the way of religion. Those that were formerly looser young persons, are generally, to all appearance, become true lovers of God and Christ, and spiritual in their dispositions. And I hope that by far the greater part of persons in this town, above sixteen years of age, are such as have the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ; and so by what I heard I suppose it is in some other places, particularly at Sunderland and South Hadley.

This has also appeared to be a very extraordinary dispensation, in that the spirit of God has so much extended not only his awakening, but regenerating influences, both to elderly persons, and also those that are very young. It has been a thing heretofore rarely heard of, that any were converted past middle age; but now we have the same ground to think, that many such have in this time been savingly changed, as that others have been so in more early years. I suppose there were upwards of fifty persons in this town above forty years of age; and more than twenty of them above fifty, and about ten of them above sixty, and two of them above seventy years of age.

It has heretofore been looked on as a strange thing, when any have seemed to be savingly wrought upon, and remarkably changed in their childhood; but now, I suppose, near

thirty were to appearance so wrought upon between ten and fourteen years of age, and two between nine and ten, and one of them about four years of age; and because, I suppose, this last will be most difficultly believed, I shall hereafter give a particular account of it. The influences of God's spirit have also been very remarkable on children in some other places, particularly at Sunderland and South Hadley, and the west part of Suffield. There are several families in this town that are all hopefully pious; yea, there are several numerous families, in which, I think, we have reason to hope that all the children are truly godly, and most of them lately become so: And there are very few houses in the whole town, into which salvation has not lately come, in one or more instances. There are several negroes, that from what was seen in them then, and what is discernible in them since, appear to have been truly born again in the late remarkable season.

God has also seemed to have gone out of his usual way in the quickness of his work, and the swift progress his spirit has made in his operation, on the hearts of many: 'Tis wonderful that persons should be so suddenly, and yet so greatly changed: Many have been taken from a loose and careless way of living, and seized with strong convictions of their guilt and misery, and in a very little time old things have passed away, and all things have become new with them.

God's work has also appeared very extraordinary, in the degrees of the influences of his spirit, both in the degree of awakening and conviction, and also in a degree of saving light, and love, and joy, that many have experienced. It has also been very extraordinary in the extent of it, and its being so swiftly propagated from town to town. In former times of the pouring out of the spirit of God on this town, though in some of them it was very remarkable, yet it reached no further than this town, the neighboring towns all round continued unmoved.

The work of God's spirit seemed to be at its greatest height in this town, in the former part of the spring, in March and April; at which time God's work in the conversion of souls was carried on amongst us in so wonderful a manner, that so

far as I, by looking back, can judge from the particular acquaintance I have had with souls in this work, it appears to me probable, to have been at the rate, at least of four persons in a day, or near thirty in a week, take one with another, for five or six weeks together: When God in so remarkable a manner took the work into his own hands, there was as much done in a day or two, as at ordinary times, with all endeavors that men can use, and with such a blessing as we commonly have, is done in a year.

I am very sensible how apt many would be, if they should see the account I have here given, presently to think with themselves that I am very fond of making a great many converts, and of magnifying and aggrandizing the matter; and to think that, for want of judgment, I take every religious pang, and enthusiastic conceit, for saving conversion; and I do not much wonder if they should be apt to think so: And for this reason, I have forborn to publish an account of this great work of God, though I have often been put upon it; but having now as I thought a special call to give an account of it, upon mature consideration I thought it might not be beside my duty to declare this amazing work, as it appeared to me, to be indeed divine, and to conceal no part of the glory of it, leaving it with God to take care of the credit of his own work, and running the venture of any censorious thoughts, which might be entertained of me to my disadvantage. But that distant persons may be under as great advantage as may be, to judge for themselves of this matter, I would be a little more large, and particular.

I therefore proceed to give an account of the manner of persons being wrought upon; and here there is a vast variety, perhaps as manifold as the subjects of the operation; but yet in many things there is a great analogy in all.

Persons are first awakened with a sense of their miserable condition by nature, the danger they are in of perishing eternally, and that it is of great importance to them that they speedily escape, and get into a better state. Those that before were secure and senseless, are made sensible how much they were in the way to ruin in their former courses. Some are

more suddenly seized with convictions; it may be, by the news of others conversion, or something they hear in public, or in private conference, their consciences are suddenly smitten, as if their hearts were pierced through with a dart: Others have awakenings that come upon them more gradually, they begin at first to be something more thoughtful and considerate, so as to come to a conclusion in their minds, that it is their best and wisest way to delay no longer, but to improve the present opportunity; and have acccordingly set themselves seriously to meditate on those things that have the most awakening tendency, on purpose to obtain convictions; and so their awakenings have increased, till a sense of their misery, by God's spirit setting in therewith, has had fast hold of them. Others that, before this wonderful time, had been something religious and concerned for their salvation, have been awakened in a new manner, and made sensible that their slack and dull way of seeking was never like to attain their purpose, and so have been roused up to a greater violence for the kingdom of heaven.

These awakenings when they have first seized on persons, have had two effects: One was, that they have brought them immediately to quit their sinful practices, and the looser sort have been brought to forsake and dread their former vices and extravagancies. When once the spirit of God began to be so wonderfully poured out in a general way through the town, people had soon done with their old quarrels, backbitings, and intermeddling with other men's matters; the tavern was soon left empty, and persons kept very much at home; none went abroad unless on necessary business, or on some religious account, and every day seemed in many respects like a sabbath-day. And the other effect was, that it put them on earnest application to the means of salvation, reading, prayer, meditation, the ordinances of God's house, and private conference; their cry was, *What shall we do to be saved?* The place of resort was now altered, it was no longer the tavern, but the minister's house; that was thronged far more than ever the tavern had been wont to be.

There is a very great variety, as to the degree of fear and trouble that persons are exercised with, before they obtain any comfortable evidences of pardon and acceptance with God: Some are from the beginning carried on with abundantly more encouragement and hope, than others: Some have had ten times less trouble of mind than others, in whom yet the issue seems to be the same. Some have had such a sense of the displeasure of God, and the great danger they were in of damnation, that they could not sleep at nights; and many have said that when they have laid down, the thoughts of sleeping in such a condition have been frightful to them, and they have scarcely been free from terror while they have been asleep, and they have awaked with fear, heaviness, and distress still abiding on their spirits. It has been very common, that the deep and fixed concern that has been on persons minds, has had a painful influence on their bodies, and given disturbance to animal nature.

The awful apprehensions persons have had of their misery, have for the most part been increasing, the nearer they have approached to deliverance; though they often pass through many changes, and alterations in the frame and circumstances of their minds: Sometimes they think themselves wholly senseless, and fear that the spirit of God has left them, and that they are given up to judicial hardness; yet they appear very deeply exercised about that fear, and are in great earnest to obtain convictions again.

Together with those fears, and that exercise of mind which is rational, and which they have just ground for, they have often suffered many needless distresses of thought, in which Satan probably has a great hand, to entangle them, and block up their way; and sometimes the distemper of melancholy has been evidently mixed; of which, when it happens, the tempter seems to make great advantage, and puts an unhappy bar in the way of any good effect: One knows not how to deal with such persons; they turn every thing that is said to them the wrong way, and most to their own disadvantage: And there is nothing that the devil seems to make so great a handle of, as a melancholy humor, unless it be the real corruption of the heart.

But it has been very remarkable, that there has been far less of this mixture in this time of extraordinary blessing, than there was wont to be in persons under awakenings at other times; for it is evident that many that before had been exceedingly involved in such difficulties, seemed now strangely to be set at liberty: Some persons that had before for a long time, been exceedingly entangled with peculiar temptations, of one sort or other, and unprofitable and hurtful distresses, were soon helped over former stumbling blocks, that hindered any progress towards saving good; and convictions have wrought more kindly, and they have been successfully carried on in the way to life. And thus Satan seemed to be restrained, till towards the latter end of this wonderful time, when God's spirit was about to withdraw.

Many times persons under great awakenings were concerned, because they thought they were not awakened, but miserable, hard hearted, senseless, sottish creatures still, and sleeping upon the brink of hell: The sense of the need they have to be awakened, and of their comparative hardness, grows upon them with their awakenings; so that they seem to themselves to be very senseless, when indeed most sensible. There have been some instances of persons that have had as great a sense of their danger and misery, as their natures could well subsist under, so that a little more would probably have destroyed them; and yet they have expresed themselves much amazed at their own insensibility and sottishness, in such an extraordinary time as it then was.

Persons are sometimes brought to the borders of despair, and it looks as black as midnight to them a little before the day dawns in their souls; some few instances there have been of persons, who have had such a sense of God's wrath for sin, that they have been overborn, and made to cry out under an astonishing sense of their guilt, wondering that God suffers such guilty wretches to live upon earth, and that he doth not immediately send them to hell; and sometimes their guilt does so glare them in the face, that they are in exceeding terror for fear that God will instantly do it; but more commonly the distresses under legal awakenings have not been to

such a degree. In some these terrors do not seem to be so sharp, when near comfort, as before; their convictions have not seemed to work so much that way, but they seem to be led further down into their own hearts, to a further sense of their own universal depravity, and deadness in sin.

The corruption of the heart has discovered itself in various exercises in the time of legal convictions; sometimes it appears in a great struggle, like something roused by an enemy, and Satan the old inhabitant seems to exert himself, like a serpent disturbed and enraged. Many in such circumstances, have felt a great spirit of envy, towards the godly, especially towards those that are thought to have been lately converted, and most of all towards acquaintances and companions, when they are thought to be converted: Indeed some have felt many heart risings against God, and murmurings at his ways of dealing with mankind, and his dealings with themselves in particular. It has been much insisted on, both in public and private, that persons should have the utmost dread of such envious thoughts, which, if allowed, tend exceedingly to quench the spirit of God, if not to provoke him finally to forsake them. And when such a spirit has much prevailed, and persons have not so earnestly strove against it as they ought to have done, it has seemed to be exceedingly to the hinderance of the good of their souls: But in some other instances, where persons have been much terrified at the sight of such wickedness in their hearts, God has brought good to them out of evil; and made it a means of convincing them of their own desperate sinfulness, and bringing them off from all self confidence.

The drift of the spirit of God in his legal strivings with persons, has seemed most evidently to be, to make way for, and to bring to, a conviction of their absolute dependence on his sovereign power and grace, and universal necessity of a mediator, by leading them more and more to a sense of their exceeding wickedness, and guiltiness in his sight; the pollution, and insufficiency of their own righteousness, that they can in no wise help themselves, and that God would be wholly just and righteous in rejecting them, and all that they do, and in casting them off for ever: Though there be a vast variety, as

to the manner, and distinctness of persons' convictions of these things.

As they are gradually more and more convinced of the corruption and wickedness of their hearts, they seem to themselves to grow worse and worse, harder and blinder, and more desperately wicked, instead of growing better; They are ready to be discouraged by it, and oftentimes never think themselves so far off from good, as when they are nearest. Under the sense which the spirit of God gives them of their sinfulness, they often think that they differ from all others; their hearts are ready to sink with the thought, that they are the worst of all, and that none ever obtained mercy that were so wicked as they.

When awakenings first begin, their consciences are commonly most exercised about their outward vicious course, or other acts of sin; but afterwards, are much more burdened with a sense of heart sins, the dreadful corruption of their nature, their enmity against God, the pride of their hearts, their unbelief, their rejection of Christ, the stubbornness and obstinacy of their wills; and the like. In many, God makes much use of their own experience, in the course of their awakenings and endeavors after saving good, to convince them of their own vile emptiness and universal depravity.

Very often under first awakenings, when they are brought to reflect on the sin of their past lives, and have something of a terrifying sense of God's anger, they set themselves to walk more strictly, and confess their sins, and perform many religious duties, with a secret hope of appeasing God's anger, and making up for the sins they have committed: And oftentimes, at first setting out, their affections are moved, and they are full of tears, in their confessions and prayers, which they are ready to make very much of, as though they were some atonement, and had power to move correspondent affections in God too: And hence they are for a while big with expectation of what God will do for them; and conceive that they grow better apace, and shall soon be thoroughly converted. But these affections are but short lived, they quickly find that they fail, and then they think themselves to be grown worse again;

they do not find such a prospect of being soon converted as they thought; instead of being nearer, they seem to be farther off; their hearts they think are grown harder, and by this means their fears of perishing greatly increase. But though they are disappointed, they renew their attempts again and again; and still as their attempts are multiplied, so are their disappointments; all fail, they see no token of having inclined God's heart to them, they do not see that he hears their prayer at all, as they expected he would; and sometimes there have been great temptations arising hence to leave off seeking, and to yield up the case. But as they are still more terrified with fears of perishing, and their former hopes of prevailing on God to be merciful to them in a great measure fail, sometimes their religious affections have turned into heart risings against God, because that he would not pity them, and seems to have little regard to their distress and piteous cries, and to all the pains they take: They think of the mercy that God has shown to others, how soon, and how easily others have obtained comfort, and those too that were worse than they, and have not labored so much as they have done, and sometimes they have had even dreadful blasphemous thoughts, in these circumstances.

But when they reflect on these wicked workings of heart against God, if their convictions are continued, and the spirit of God is not provoked utterly to forsake them, they have more distressing apprehensions of the anger of God towards those, whose hearts work after such a sinful manner about him; and it may be have great fears that they have committed the unpardonable sin, or that God will surely never shew mercy to them that are such vipers: And are often tempted to leave off in despair.

But then perhaps, by something they read or hear of the infinite mercy of God, and allsufficiency of Christ for the chief of sinners; they have some encouragement and hope renewed; but think that as yet they are not fit to come to Christ, they are so wicked that Christ will never accept of them: And then it may be they set themselves upon a new course of fruitless endeavors in their own strength to make themselves

better, and still meet with new disappointments: They are earnest to inquire what they shall do? They do not know but there is something else to be done, in order to their obtaining converting grace, that they have never done yet. It may be they hope that they are something better than they were; but then the pleasing dream all vanishes again. If they are told that they trust too much to their own strength and righteousness, they cannot unlearn this practice all at once, and find not yet the appearance of any good, but all looks as dark as midnight to them. Thus they wander about from mountain to hill, seeking rest and finding none: When they are beat out of one refuge they fly to another, till they are, as it were, debilitated, broken, and subdued with legal humblings; in which God gives them a conviction of their own utter helplessness and insufficiency, and discovers the true remedy in a clearer knowledge of Christ and his gospel.

When they begin to seek salvation, they are commonly profoundly ignorant of themselves; they are not sensible how blind they are, and how little they can do towards bringing themselves to see spiritual things aright, and towards putting forth gracious exercises in their own souls; they are not sensible how remote they are from love to God, and other holy dispositions, and how dead they are to sin. When they see unexpected pollution in their own hearts, they go about to wash away their own defilements, and make themselves clean; and they weary themselves in vain, till God shews them it is in vain, and that their help is not where they have sought it, but elsewhere.

But some persons continue wandering in such a kind of labyrinth, ten times as long as others, before their own experience will convince them of their insufficiency; and so it appears not to be their own experience only, but the convincing influence of God's spirit with their experience, that attains the effect: And God has of late abundantly shown that he does not need to wait to have men convinced by long and often repeated, fruitless trials; for in multitudes of instances he has made a shorter work of it: He has so awakened and convinced persons consciences, and made them so sensible of

their exceeding great vileness, and given them such a sense of his wrath against sin, as has quickly overcome all their vain self confidence, and borne them down into the dust before a holy and righteous God.

There have been some who have not had great terrors, but have had a very quick work. Some of those that have not had so deep a conviction of these things before their conversion, have, it may be, much more of it afterwards. God has appeared far from limiting himself to any certain method in his proceedings with sinners under legal convictions. In some instances it seems easy for our reasoning powers to discern the methods of divine wisdom, in his dealings with the soul under awakenings: In others his footsteps cannot be traced, and his ways are past finding out: And some that are less distinctly wrought upon, in what is preparatory to grace, appear no less eminent in gracious experiences afterwards.

There is in nothing a greater difference, in different persons, than with respect to the time of their being under trouble; some but a few days, and others for months or years. There were many in this town that had been before this effusion of God's spirit upon us, for years, and some for many years, concerned about their salvation; though probably they were not thoroughly awakened, yet they were concerned to such a degree as to be very uneasy, so as to live an uncomfortable, disquieted life, and so as to continue in a way of taking considerable pains about their salvation, but had never obtained any comfortable evidence of a good estate, who now in this extraordinary time have received light; but many of them were some of the last: They first saw multitudes of others rejoicing, and with songs of deliverance in their mouths, who seemed wholly careless and at ease, and in pursuit of vanity, while they had been bowed down with solicitude about their souls; yea, some had lived licentiously, and so continued till a little before they were converted, and grew up to a holy rejoicing in the infinite blessings God had bestowed upon them.

And whatever minister has a like occasion to deal with souls, in a flock under such circumstances, as this was in the

last year; I cannot but think he will soon find himself under a necessity, greatly to insist upon it with them, that God is under no manner of obligation to shew any mercy to any natural man, whose heart is not turned to God: And that a man can challenge nothing, either in absolute justice, or by free promise, from any thing he does before he has believed on Jesus Christ, or has true repentance begun in him. It appears to me, that if I had taught those that came to me under trouble, any other doctrine, I should have taken a most direct course utterly to have undone them: I should have directly crossed what was plainly the drift of the spirit of God in his influences upon them; for if they had believed what I said, it would either have promoted selfflattery and carelessness, and so put an end to their awakenings; or cherished and established their contention and strife with God, concerning his dealings with them and others, and blocked up their way to that humiliation before the sovereign disposer of life and death, whereby God is wont to prepare them for his consolations. And yet those that have been under awakenings, have often times plainly stood in need of being encouraged, by being told of the infinite and allsufficient mercy of God in Christ; and that it is God's manner to succeed diligence, and to bless his own means, that so awakenings and encouragements, fear and hope, may be duly mixed, and proportioned to preserve their minds in a just medium between the two extremes of selfflattery and despondence, both which tend to slackness and negligence, and in the end to security.

I think I have found that no discourses have been more remarkably blessed, than those in which the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty with regard to the salvation of sinners, and his just liberty, with regard to answering the prayers, or succeeding the pains of mere natural men, continuing such, have been insisted on. I never found so much immediate saving fruit, in any measure, of any discourses I have offered to my congregation, as some from those words. Rom. iii. 19. "That every mouth may be stopped;" endeavoring to shew from thence that it would be just with God forever to reject and cast off mere natural men.

In those in whom awakenings seem to have a saving issue, commonly the first thing that appears after their legal troubles, is a conviction of the justice of God in their condemnation, in a sense of their own exceeding sinfulness, and the vileness of all their performances: In giving an account of this they expressed themselves very variously; some, that they saw that God was sovereign, and might receive others and reject them; some, that they were convinced, that God might justly bestow mercy on every person in the town, and on every person in the world, and damn themselves to all eternity; some, that they see that God may justly have no regard to all the pains they have taken, and all the prayers they have made; some, that they see that if they should seek, and take the utmost pains all their lives, God might justly cast them into hell at last, because all their labors, prayers and tears, cannot make an atonement for the least sin, nor merit any blessing at the hands of God; some have declared themselves to be in the hands of God, that he can and may dispose of them just as he pleases; some that God may glorify himself in their damnation, and they wonder that God has suffered them to live so long, and has not cast them into hell long ago.

Some are brought to this conviction, by a great sense of their sinfulness, in general, that they are such vile wicked creatures in heart and life: Others have the sins of their lives in an extraordinary manner set before them, multitudes of them coming just then fresh to their memory, and being set before them with their aggravations; some have their minds especially fixed, on some particular wicked practice, they have indulged; some are especially convinced by a sight of the corruption and wickedness of their hearts; some from a view they have of the horridness of some particular exercises of corruption, which they have had in the time of their awakening, whereby the enmity of the heart against God has been manifested; some are convinced especially by a sense of the sin of unbelief, the opposition of their hearts to the way of salvation by Christ, and their obstinacy in rejecting him and his grace.

There is a great deal of difference as to persons distinctness here; some, that have not so clear a sight of God's justice in their condemnation, yet mention things that plainly imply it. They find a disposition to acknowledge God to be just and righteous in his threatenings, and that they are deserving of nothing: And many times, though they had not so particular a sight of it at the beginning, they have very clear discoveries of it soon afterwards, with great humblings in the dust before God.

Commonly persons' minds immediately before this discovery of God's justice are exceeding restless, and in a kind of struggle and tumult, and sometimes in mere anguish; but generally, as soon as they have this conviction, it immediately brings their minds to a calm, and a before unexpected quietness and composure; and most frequently, though not always, then the pressing weight upon their spirits is taken away, and a general hope arises, that some time or other God will be gracious, even before any distinct and particular discoveries of mercy; and often they then come to a conclusion within themselves, that they will lie at God's feet, and wait his time; and they rest in that, not being sensible that the spirit of God has now brought them to a frame whereby they are prepared for mercy; for it is remarkable that persons, when they first have this sense of the justice of God, rarely, in the time of it, think any thing of its being that humiliation that they have often heard insisted on, and that others experience.

In many persons, the first convictions of the justice of God in their condemnation, which they take particular notice of, and probably the first distinct conviction of it that they have, is of such a nature, as seems to be above any thing merely legal: Though it be after legal humblings, and much of a sense of their own helplessness, and of the insufficiency of their own duties; yet it does not appear to be forced by mere legal terrors and convictions; but rather from an high exercise of grace, in saving repentance, and evangelical humiliation; for there is in it a sort of complacency of soul, in the attribute of God's justice, as displayed in his threatenings of eternal damnation to sinners. Sometimes at the discovery of it, they can

scarcely forbear crying out, 'Tis JUST! 'Tis JUST!....Some express themselves, that they see the glory of God would shine bright in their own condemnation; and they are ready to think that if they are damned, they could take part with God against themselves, and would glorify his justice therein. And when it is thus, they commonly have some evident sense of free and allsufficient grace, though they give no distinct account of it; but it is manifest, by that great degree of hope and encouragement that they then conceive, though they were never so sensible of their own vileness and illdeservings as they are at that time.

Some, when in such circumstances, have felt that sense of the excellency of God's justice, appearing in the vindictive exercises of it, against such sinfulness as theirs was, and have had such a submission of mind in their idea of this attribute, and of those exercises of it, together with an exceeding loathing of their own unworthiness, and a kind of indignation against themselves, that they have sometimes almost called it a willingness to be damned; though it must be owned they had not clear and distinct ideas of damnation, nor does any word in the Bible require such selfdenial as this. But the truth is, as some have more clearly expressed it, that salvation has appeared too good for them, that they were worthy of nothing but condemnation, and they could not tell how to think of salvation's being bestowed upon them, fearing it was inconsistent with the glory of God's majesty that they had so much contemned and affronted.

That calm of spirit that some persons have found after their legal distresses, continues some time before any special and delightful manifestation is made to the soul of the grace of God, as revealed in the gospel; but very often some comfortable and sweet view of a merciful God, of a sufficient Redeemer, or of some great and joyful things of the gospel, immediately follows, or in a very little time: And in some, the first sight of their just desert of hell, and God's sovereignty with respect to their salvation, and a discovery of allsufficient grace, are so near, that they seem to go as it were together.

These gracious discoveries that are given, whence the first special comforts are derived, are in many respects very various; more frequently Christ is distinctly made the object of the mind, in his allsufficiency and willingness to save sinners: But some have their thoughts more especially fixed on God, in some of his sweet and glorious attributes manifested in the gospel, and shining forth in the face of Christ: Some view the allsufficiency of the mercy and grace of God; some chiefly the infinite power of God, and his ability to save them, and to do all things for them; and some look most at the truth and faithfulness of God: In some, the truth and certainty of the gospel in general is the first joyful discovery they have; in others, the certain truth of some particular promises; in some, the grace and sincerity of God in his invitations, very commonly in some particular invitation in the mind, and it now appears real to them that God does indeed invite them. Some are struck with the glory and wonderfulness of the dying love of Christ; and some with the sufficiency and preciousness of his blood, as offered to make an atonement for sin; and others with the value and glory of his obedience and righteousness. In some the excellency and loveliness of Christ chiefly engages their thoughts; in some his divinity, that he is indeed the son of the living God; and in others the excellency of the way of salvation by Christ, and the suitableness of it to their necessities.

Some have an apprehension of these things so given, that it seems more natural to them to express it by sight or discovery; others think what they experience better expressed by the realizing conviction, or a lively or feeling sense of heart; meaning, as I suppose, no other difference but what is merely circumstantial or gradual.

There is often, in the mind, some particular text of scripture, holding forth some evangelical ground of consolation; sometimes a multitude of texts, gracious invitations and promises flowing in one after another, filling the soul more and more with comfort and satisfaction; and comfort is first given to some while reading some portion of scripture; but in some it is attended with no particular scripture at all, either in read-

ing or meditation. In some, many divine things seem to be discovered to the soul as it were at once; others have their minds especially fixing on some one thing at first, and afterwards a sense is given of others; in some with a swifter, and others a slower succession, and sometimes with interruptions of much darkness.

The way that grace seems sometimes first to appear after legal humiliation, is in earnest longings of soul after God and Christ, to know God, to love him, to be humbled before him, to have communion with Christ in his benefits; which longings, as they express them, seem evidently to be of such a nature as can arise from nothing but a sense of the superlative excellency of divine things, with a spiritual taste and relish of them, and an esteem of them as their highest happiness and best portion. Such longings as I speak of, are commonly attended with firm resolutions to pursue this good forever, together with a hoping, waiting disposition. When persons have begun in such frames, commonly other experiences and discoveries have soon followed, which have yet more clearly manifested a change of heart.

It must needs be confest that Christ is not always distinctly and explicitly thought of in the first sensible act of grace (though most commonly he is;) but sometimes he is the object of the mind only implicitly. Thus sometimes when persons have seemed evidently to be stript of all their own righteousness, and to have stood self condemned as guilty of death, they have been comforted with a joyful and satisfying view, that the mercy and grace of God is sufficient for them; that their sins, though never so great, shall be no hinderance to their being accepted; that there is mercy enough in God for the whole world, and the like, when they give no account of any particular or distinct thought of Christ; but yet when the account they give is duly weighed, and they are a little interrogated about it, it appears that the revelation of the mercy of God in the gospel, is the ground of this their encouragement and hope; and that it is indeed the mercy of God through Christ, that is discovered to them, and that it is depended on in him, and not in any wise moved by any thing in them.

So sometimes disconsolate souls amongst us, have been revived and brought to rest in God, by a sweet sense given of his grace and faithfulness, in some special invitation or promise, in which is no particular mention of Christ, nor is it accompanied with any distinct thought of him in their minds; but yet it is not received as out of Christ, but as one of the invitations or promises made of God to poor sinners through his son Jesus, as it is indeed; and such persons have afterwards had clear and distinct discoveries of Christ accompanied with lively and special actings of faith and love towards him.

It has more frequently been so amongst us, that when persons have first had the gospel ground of relief for lost sinners discovered to them, and have been entertaining their minds with the sweet prospect, they have thought nothing at that time of their being converted: To see that there is such an allsufficiency in God, and such plentiful provision made in Christ, after they have been borne down, and sunk with a sense of their guilt and fears of wrath, exceedingly refreshes them; the view is joyful to them, as it is in its own nature glorious, and gives them quite new, and more delightful ideas of God and Christ, and greatly encourages them to seek conversion, and begets in them a strong resolution to give up themselves, and devote their whole lives to God and his son, and patiently to wait till God shall see fit to make all effectual; and very often they entertain a strong persuasion, that he will in his own time do it for them.

There is wrought in them a holy repose of soul in God through Christ, and a secret disposition to fear and love him, and to hope for blessings from him in this way: And yet they have no imagination that they are now converted, it does not so much as come into their minds; and very often the reason is, that they do not see that they do accept of this sufficiency of salvation, that they behold in Christ, having entertained a wrong notion of acceptance; not being sensible that the obedient and joyful entertainment which their hearts give to this discovery of grace, is a real acceptance of it: They know not that the sweet complacence they feel in the mercy and complete salvation of God, as it includes pardon and sanctifi-

cation, and is held forth to them only through Christ, is a true receiving of this mercy, or a plain evidence of their receiving it. They expected I know not what kind of act of soul, and perhaps they had no distinct idea of it themselves.

And indeed it appears very plainly in some of them, that before their own conversion they had very imperfect ideas what conversion was: It is all new and strange, and what there was no clear conception of before. It is most evident, as they themselves acknowledge, that the expressions that were used to describe conversion, and the graces of God's spirit, such as a spiritual sight of Christ, faith in Christ, poverty of spirit, trust in God, resignedness to God, &c. were expressions that did not convey those special and distinct ideas to their minds which they were intended to signify: Perhaps to some of them it was but little more than the names of colors are to convey the ideas to one that is blind from his birth.

This town is a place where there has always been a great deal of talk of conversion, and spiritual experiences; and therefore people in general had before formed a notion in their own minds what these things were; but when they come to be the subjects of them themselves, they find themselves much confounded in their notions, and overthrown in many of their former conceits. And it has been very observable, that persons of the greatest understanding, and that had studied most about things of this nature, have been more confounded than others. Some such persons that have lately been converted, declare that all their former wisdom is brought to nought, and that they appear to have been mere babes, who knew nothing. It has appeared that none have stood more in need of enlightening and instruction, even of their fellow christians, concerning their own circumstances and difficulties, than they: And it has seemed to have been with delight, that they have seen themselves thus brought down and become nothing, that free grace and divine power may be exalted in them.

It was very wonderful to see after what manner person's affections were sometimes moved and wrought upon, when God

did, as it were, suddenly open their eyes, and let into their minds, a sense of the greatness of his grace, and fulness of Christ, and his readiness to save, who before were broken with apprehensions of divine wrath, and sunk into an abyss under a sense of guilt, which they were ready to think was beyond the mercy of God: Their joyful surprise has caused their hearts as it were to leap, so that they have been ready to break forth into laughter, tears often at the same time issuing like a flood, and intermingling a loud weeping: And sometimes they have not been able to forbear crying out with a loud voice, expressing their great admiration. In some even the view of the glory of God's sovereignty in the exercises of his grace, has surprised the soul with such sweetness, as to produce the same effects. I remember an instance of one, who, reading something concerning God's sovereign way of saving sinners, as being selfmoved, and having no regard to men's own righteousness as the motive of his grace, but as magnifying himself, and abasing man, or to that purpose, felt such a sudden rapture of joy and delight in the consideration of it; and yet then suspected himself to be in a Christless condition, and had been long in great distress for fear that God would not have mercy on him.

Many continue a long time in a course of gracious exercises and experiences, and do not think themselves to be converted, but conclude themselves to be otherwise; and none knows how long they would continue so, were they not helped by particular instruction. There are undoubted instances of some that have lived in this way for many years together; and a continuing in these circumstances of being converted and not believing it, has had various consequences, with various persons, and with the same persons, at various times; some continue in great encouragement and hope, that they shall obtain mercy, in a stedfast resolution to persevere in seeking it, and in an humble waiting for it at God's foot; but very often when the lively sense of the sufficiency of Christ, and the riches of divine grace begins to vanish, upon a withdraw of the influences of the spirit of God, they return to greater distress than ever; for they have now a far greater

sense of the misery of a natural condition than before, being in a new manner sensible of the reality of eternal things, and the greatness of God, and his excellency, and how dreadful it is to be separated from him, and to be subject to his wrath; so that they are sometimes swallowed up with darkness and amazement. Satan has a vast advantage in such cases to ply them with various temptations, which he is not wont to neglect. In such a case persons do very much need a guide to lead them to an understanding of what we are taught in the word of God of the nature of grace, and to help them to apply it to themselves.

I have been much blamed and censured by many, that I should make it my practice, when I have been satisfied concerning persons' good estate, to signify it to them: Which thing has been greatly misrepresented abroad, as innumerable other things concerning us, to prejudice the country against the whole affair. But let it be noted, that what I have undertaken to judge of, has rather been qualifications, and declared experiences, than persons: Not but that I have thought it my duty, as a pastor, to assist and instruct persons in applying scripture rules and characters to their own case, (in doing of which, I think many greatly need a guide;) and have, where I thought the case plain, used freedom in signifying my hope of them, to others: But have been far from doing this concerning all that I have had some hopes of; and I believe have used much more caution than many have supposed. Yet I should account it a great calamity to be deprived of the comfort of rejoicing with those of my flock, that have been in great distress, whose circumstances I have been acquainted with, when there seems to be good evidence that those that were dead are alive, and those that were lost are found. I am sensible the practice would have been safer in the hands of one of a riper judgment and greater experience; but yet there has seemed to be an absolute necessity of it on the forementioned accounts; and it has been found to be that which God has most remarkably owned and blessed amongst us, both to the persons themselves, and others.

Grace in many persons, through this ignorance of their state, and their looking on themselves still as the objects of God's displeasure, has been like the trees in winter, or like seed in the spring suppressed under a hard clod of earth; and many in such cases have labored to their utmost to divert their minds from the pleasing and joyful views they have had, and to suppress those consolations and gracious affections that arose thereupon. And when it has once come into their minds to inquire whether or no this was not true grace, they have been much afraid lest they should be deceived with common illuminations and flashes of affection, and eternally undone with a false hope. But when they have been better instructed, and so brought to allow of hope, this has awakened the gracious disposition of their hearts into life and vigor, as the warm beams of the sun in the spring, have quickened the seeds and productions of the earth: Grace being now at liberty, and cherished with hope, has soon flowed out to their abundant satisfaction and increase.

There is no one thing that I know of that God has made such a means of promoting his work amongst us, as the news of others conversion; in the awakening sinners, and engaging them earnestly to seek the same blessing, and in the quickening of saints. Though I have thought that a minister's declaring his judgment about particular person's experiences, might from these things be justified, yet I am often signifying to my people how unable man is to know another's heart, and how unsafe it is depending merely on the judgment of ministers, or others; and have abundantly insisted on it with them, that a manifestation of sincerity in fruits brought forth, is better than any manifestation they can make of it in words alone can be; and that without this, all pretences to spiritual experiences are vain; as all my congregation can witness..... And the people in general, in this late extraordinary time, have manifested an extraordinary dread of being deceived, being exceeding fearful lest they should build wrong, and some of them backward to receive hope, even to a great extreme, which has occasioned me to dwell longer on this part of the narrative.

Conversion is a great and glorious work of God's power, at once changing the heart, and infusing life into the dead soul; though that grace that is then implanted does more gradually display itself in some than in others. But as to fixing on the precise time when they put forth the very first act of grace, there is a great deal of difference in different persons; in some it seems to be very discernible when the very time of this was; but others are more at a loss. In this respect there are very many that do not know the time (as has been already observed) when they have the first exercises of grace, do not know that it is the grace of conversion, and sometimes do not think it to be so till a long time after: And many, even when they come to entertain great hope that they are converted, if they remember what they experienced in the first exercises of grace, they are at a loss whether it was any more than a common illumination; or whether some other, more clear and remarkable experience, that they had afterwards, was not the first that was of a saving nature. And the manner of God's work on the soul is (sometimes especially) very mysterious, and it is with the kingdom of God as to its manifestation in the heart of a convert, as it is said Mark iv. 26, 27, 28. "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring, and grow up, he knoweth not how; for the earth bringeth forth of herself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear."

In some, converting light is like a glorious brightness, suddenly shining in upon a person, and all around him: They are in a remarkable manner brought *out of darkness into marvellous light*. In many others it has been like the dawning of the day, when at first but a little light appears, and it may be is presently hid with a cloud; and then it appears again and shines a little brighter, and gradually increases, with intervening darkness, till at length, perhaps, it breaks forth more clearly from behind the clouds. And many are, doubtless, ready to date their conversion wrong, throwing by those lesser degrees of light that appeared at first dawning, and calling some more remarkable experience, that they had

afterwards, their conversion; which often in great measure arises from a wrong understanding of what they have always been taught, that conversion is a great change, wherein *old things are done away, and all things become new*, or at least from a false arguing from that doctrine.

Persons commonly at first conversion, and afterwards, have had many texts of scripture brought to their minds, that are exceeding suitable to their circumstances, which often come with great power, and as the word of God or Christ indeed; and many have a multitude of sweet invitations, promises, and doxologies flowing in one after another, bringing great light and comfort with them, filling the soul brim full, enlarging the heart, and opening the mouth in religion. And it seems to me necessary to suppose, that there is an immediate influence of the spirit of God, oftentimes in bringing texts of scripture to the mind: Not that I suppose it is done in a way of immediate revelation, without any manner of use of the memory; but yet there seems plainly to be an immediate and extraordinary influence, in leading their thoughts to such and such passages of scripture, and exciting them in the memory. Indeed, in some, God seems to bring texts of scripture to their minds no otherwise than by leading them into such frames and meditations, as harmonize with those scriptures; but in many persons there seems to be something more than this.

Those that while under legal convictions, had the greatest terrors have not always obtained the greatest light and comfort; nor have they always light most suddenly communicated; but yet I think, the time of conversion has generally been most sensible in such persons. Oftentimes, the first sensible change after the extremity of terrors, is a calmness, and then the light gradually comes in; small glimpses at first, after their midnight darkness, and a word or two of comfort, as it were, softly spoken to them; they have a little taste of the sweetness of divine grace, and the love of a Saviour, when terror and distress of conscience begins to be turned into an humble, meek sense of their own unworthiness before God; and there is felt inwardly, perhaps, some disposition to praise

God; and after a little while the light comes in more clearly and powerfully. But yet, I think more frequently, great terrors have been followed with more sudden and great light, and comfort; when the sinner seems to be, as it were, subdued and brought to a calm, from a kind of tumult of mind, then God lets in an extraordinary sense of his great mercy through a Redeemer.

The converting influences of God's spirit very commonly bring an extraordinary conviction of the reality and certainty of the great things of religion; (though in some this is much greater, some time after conversion, than at first:) They have that sight and taste of the divinity, or divine excellency, that there is in the things of the gospel, that is more to convince them, than reading many volumes of arguments without it. It seems to me that in many instances amongst us, when the divine excellency and glory of the things of Christianity have been set before persons, and they have at the same time, as it were, seen and tasted, and felt the divinity of them, they have been as far from doubting of the truth of them, as they are from doubting whether there be a sun, when their eyes are open in the midst of a clear hemisphere, and the strong blaze of his light overcomes all objections against his being. And yet many of them, if we would ask them why they believed those things to be true, would not be able well to express, or communicate a sufficient reason, to satisfy the inquirer, and perhaps would make no other answer but that they see them to be true: But a person may soon be satisfied, by a particular conversation with them, that what they mean by such an answer, is, that they have intuitively beheld, and immediately felt, most illustrious works, and powerful evidence of divinity in them.

Some are thus convinced of the truth of the gospel in general, and that the scriptures are the word of God: Others have their minds more especially fixed on some particular great doctrine of the gospel, some particular truths that they are meditating on; or are in a special manner convinced of the divinity of the things they are reading of, in some portion of scripture. Some have such convictions in a much

more remarkable manner than others. And there are some that never had such a special sense of the certainty of divine things impressed upon them with such inward evidence and strength, have yet very clear exercises of grace ; i. e. of love to God, repentance, and holiness. And if they be more particularly examined, they appear plainly to have an inward, firm persuasion of the reality of divine things, such as they do not use to have before their conversion. And those that have the most clear discoveries of divine truth, in the manner that has been spoken of, cannot have this always in view. When the sense and relish of the divine excellency of these things fades, on a withdrawment of the spirit of God, they have not the medium of the conviction of their truth at command : In a dull frame they cannot recal the idea, and inward sense they had, perfectly to mind ; things appear very dim to what they did before : And though there still remains an habitual strong persuasion, yet not so as to exclude temptations to unbelief, and all possibility of doubting, as before : But then at particular times, by God's help, the same sense of things revives again, like fire that lay hid in ashes.

I suppose the grounds of such a conviction of the truth of divine things to be just and rational, but yet in some God makes use of their own reason much more sensibly than in others. Oftentimes persons have (so far as could be judged) received the first saving conviction from reasoning, which they have heard from the pulpit ; and often in the course of reasoning, which they are led into in their own meditations.

The arguments are the same that they have heard hundreds of times ; but the force of the arguments, and their conviction by them, is altogether new ; they come with a new and before unexperienced power : Before they heard it was so, and they allowed it to be so ; but now they see it to be so indeed. Things now look exceeding plain to them, and they wonder that they did not see them before.

They are so greatly taken with their new discovery, and things appear so plain and so rational to them, that they are often at first ready to think they can convince others, and are

apt to engage in talk with every one they meet with, almost to this end; and when they are disappointed, are ready to wonder that their reasonings seem to make no more impression.

Many fall under such a mistake as to be ready to doubt of their good estate, because there was so much use made of their own reason in the conviction they have received; they are afraid that they have no illumination above the natural force of their own faculties: And many make that an objection against the spirituality of their convictions, that it is so easy to see things as they now see them. They have often heard that conversion is a work of mighty power, manifesting to the soul, what no man nor angel can give, such a conviction of; but it seems to them that the things that they see are so plain and easy, and rational that any body can see them: And if they are inquired of, why they never saw so before; they say, it seems to them it was because they never thought of it. But very often these difficulties are soon removed by those of another nature; for when God withdraws, they find themselves as it were blind again, they for the present lose their realizing sense of those things that looked so plain to them, and by all that they can do they cannot recover it, till God renews the influences of his spirit.

Persons after their conversion often speak of things of religion as seeming new to them; that preaching is a new thing; that it seems to them they never heard preaching before; that the Bible is a new book: They find there new chapters, new psalms, new histories, because they see them in a new light. Here was a remarkable instance of an aged woman of above seventy years that had spent most of her days under Mr. Stoddard's powerful ministry; who, reading in the New Testament, concerning Christ's sufferings for sinners, seemed to be surprized and astonished at what she read, as at a thing that was real and very wonderful, but quite new to her, insomuch that at first, before she had time to turn her thoughts, she wondered within herself that she had never heard of it before; but then immediately recollected herself, and thought that she had often heard of it, and read it, but

never until now saw it as a thing real; and then cast in her mind, how wonderful this was, that the Son of God should undergo such things for sinners, and how she had spent her time in ungratefully sinning against so good a God, and such a Saviour; though she was a person, as to what was visible, of a very blameless and inoffensive life. And she was so overcome by those considerations, that her nature was ready to fail under them. Those that were about her, and knew not what was the matter, were surprized and thought she was a dying.

Many have spoke much of their hearts being drawn out in love to God and Christ, and their minds being wrapt up in delightful contemplation of the glory and wonderful grace of God, and the excellency and dying love of Jesus Christ, and of their souls going forth in longing desires after God and Christ. Several of our young children have expressed much of this, and have manifested a willingness to leave father and mother, and all things in the world, to go to be with Christ. Some persons have had longing desires after Christ, which have risen to that degree, as to take away their natural strength. Some have been so overcome with a sense of the dying love of Christ, to such poor, wretched, and unworthy creatures, as to weaken the body. Several persons have had so great a sense of the glory of God, and excellency of Christ, that nature and life have seemed almost to sink under it; and in all probability, if God had shewed them a little more of himself, it would have dissolved their frame. I have seen some and been in conversation with them in such frames, who have certainly been perfectly sober, and very remote from any thing like enthusiastic wildness; and have talked, when able to speak of the glory of God's perfections, and the wonderfulness of his grace in Christ, and their own unworthiness, in such a manner that cannot be perfectly expressed after them. Their sense of their exceeding littleness and vileness, and their disposition to abase themselves before God, has appeared to be great in proportion to their light and joy.

Such persons amongst us as have been thus distinguished with the most extraordinary discoveries with God, have com-

monly in no wise appeared with the assuming, and selfconceited, and selfsufficient airs of enthusiasts; but exceedingly the contrary; and are eminent for a spirit of meekness, modesty, selfdiffidence, and a low opinion of themselves: No persons seem to be so sensibly of their need of instruction, and so eager to receive it, as some of them; nor so ready to think others better than themselves. Those that have been thought to be converted amongst us, have generally manifested a longing to lie low, and in the dust before God; withal complaining of their not being able to lie low enough.

They very often speak much of their sense of the excellency of the way of salvation, by free and sovereign grace, through the righteousness of Christ alone; and how it is with delight that they renounce their own righteousness, and rejoice in having no account made of it. Many have expressed themselves to this purpose, that it would lessen the satisfaction they hope for in heaven, to have it by their own righteousness, or in any other way than as bestowed by free grace, and for Christ's sake alone. They speak much of the inexpressibleness of what they experience, how their words fail, so that they can in no wise declare it: And particularly speak with exceeding admiration of the superlative excellency of that pleasure and delight of soul which they sometimes enjoy; how a little of it is sufficient to pay them for all the pains and trouble they have gone through in seeking salvation; and how far it exceeds all earthly pleasures: And some express much of the sense which these spiritual views give them of the vanity of earthly enjoyments; how mean and worthless all these things appear to them.

Many, while their minds have been filled with spiritual delights, have, as it were, forgot their food; their bodily appetite has failed, while their minds have been entertained with *meat to eat that* others *knew not of.* The light and comfort which some of them enjoy, gives a new relish to their common blessings, and causes all things about them to appear as it were beautiful, sweet, and pleasant to them: All things abroad, the sun, moon and stars, the clouds and sky, the heavens and earth, appear as it were with a cast of divine glory and

sweetness upon them. The sweetest joy that these good people amongst us express, though it include in it a delightful sense of the safety of their own state, and that now they are out of danger of hell; yet frequently in times of their highest spiritual entertainment, this seems not to be the chief object of their fixed thought and meditation. The supreme attention of their minds is to the glorious excellencies of God and Christ, which they have in view; not but that there is very often a ravishing sense of God's love accompanying a sense of his excellency, and they rejoice in a sense of the faithfulness of God's promises, as they respect the future eternal enjoyment of God.

The joy that many of them speak of is, that to which none is to be parallelled; is that which they find when they are lowest in the dust, emptied most of themselves, and as it were annihilating themselves before God, when they are nothing, and God is all, are seeing their own unworthiness, depending not at all on themselves, but alone on Christ, and ascribing all glory to God: Then their souls are most in the enjoyment of satisfying rest; excepting, that at such times, they apprehend themselves to be not sufficiently selfabased; for then above all times do they long to be lower. Some speak much of the exquisite sweetness, and rest of soul that is to be found in the exercises of a spirit of resignation to God, and humble submission to his will. Many express earnest longings of soul to praise God; but at the same time complain they cannot praise him as they would do, and they want to have others help them in praising him: They want to have every one praise God, and are ready to call upon every thing to praise him. They express a longing desire to live to God's glory and to do something to his honor; but at the same time cry out of their insufficiency and barrenness, that they are poor impotent creatures, can do nothing of themselves and are utterly insufficient to glorify their Creator and Redeemer.

While God was so remarkably present amongst us by his spirit, there was no book so delighted in as the Bible; especially the book of Psalms, the prophecy of Isaiah, and the New Testament. Some by reason of their esteem and

love to God's word, have at some times been greatly and wonderfully delighted and affected at the sight of a Bible; and then also, there was no time so prized as the Lord's day, and no place in this world so desired as God's house. Our converts then remarkably appeared united in dear affection to one another, and many have expressed much of that spirit of love which they felt to all mankind; and particularly to those that had been least friendly to them. Never, I believe, was so much done in confessing injuries, and making up differences as the last year. Persons after their own conversion, have commonly expressed an exceeding desire for the conversion of others: Some have thought that they should be willing to die for the conversion of any soul, though of one of the meanest of their fellow creatures, or of their worst enemies; and many have indeed been in great distress with desires and longings for it. This work of God had also a good effect to unite the people's affections much to their minister.

There are some persons that I have been acquainted with, but more especially two, that belong to other towns, that have been swallowed up exceedingly with a sense of the awful greatness and majesty of God; and both of them told me to this purpose, that if they in the time of it, had had the least fear that they were not at peace with this so great a God, they should instantly have died.

It is worthy to be remarked, that some persons by their conversion seem to be greatly helped as to their doctrinal notions of religion; it was particularly remarkable in one, who having been taken captive in his childhood, was trained up in Canada, in the Popish religion; and some years since returned to this his native place, and was in a measure brought off from Popery, but seemed very awkward and dull of receiving any true and clear notion of the Protestant scheme, till he was converted; and then he was remarkably altered in this respect.

There is a vast difference, as has been observed, in the degree, and also in the particular manner of persons experiences, both at and after conversion; some have grace working more sensibly in one way, others in another. Some speak more

fully of a conviction of the justice of God in their condemnation; others more of their consenting to the way of salvation by Christ; some more of the actings of love to God and Christ; some more of acts of affiance, in a sweet and assured conviction of the truth and faithfulness of God in his promises; others more of their choosing and resting in God as their whole and everlasting portion, and of their ardent and longing desires after God, to have communion with him; others more of their abhorrence of themselves for their past sins, and earnest longings to live to God's glory for the time to come; some have their minds fixed more on God, others on Christ, as I have observed before, and am afraid of too much repetition; but it seems evidently to be the same work, the same thing done, the same habitual change wrought in the heart; it all tends the same way, and to the same end; and it is plainly the same spirit that breathes and acts in various persons. There is an endless variety in the particular manner and circumstances in which persons are wrought on, and an opportunity of seeing so much of such a work of God, will shew that God is further from confining himself to certain steps, and a particular method in his work on souls, than it may be some do imagine. I believe it has occasioned some good people amongst us, that were before too ready to make their own experiences a rule to others, to be less censorious and more extended in their charity, and this is an excellent advantage indeed. The work of God has been glorious in its variety, it has the more displayed the manifoldness and unsearchableness of the wisdom of God, and wrought more charity among his people.

There is a great difference among those that are converted as to the degree of hope and satisfaction that they have concerning their own state. Some have a high degree of satisfaction in this matter, almost constantly: And yet it is rare that any do enjoy so full an assurance of their interest in Christ, that selfexamination should seem needless to them; unless it be at particular seasons, while in the actual enjoyment of some great discovery, that God gives of his glory, and rich grace in Christ, to the drawing forth of extraordinary acts of

grace. But the greater part, as they sometimes fall into dead frames of spirit, are frequently exercised with scruples and fears concerning their condition.

They generally have an awful apprehension of the dreadfulness and undoing nature of a false hope; and there has been observable in most a great caution, lest in giving an account of their experiences, they should say too much, and use too strong terms: And many after they have related their experiences, have been greatly afflicted with fears, lest they have played the hypocrite, and used stronger terms than their case would fairly allow of; and yet could not find how they could correct themselves.

I think that the main ground of the doubts and fears that persons, after their conversion, have been exercised with about their own state, has been that they have found so much corruption remaining in their hearts. At first their souls seem to be all alive, their hearts are fixed, and their affections flowing; they seem to live quite above the world, and meet with but little difficulty in religious exercises; and they are ready to think it will always be so:...Though they are truly abased under a sense of their vileness by reason of former acts of sin, yet they are not then sufficiently sensible what corruption still remains in their hearts; and therefore are surprised when they find that they begin to be in dull and dead frames, to be troubled with wandering thoughts in the time of public and private worship, and to be utterly unable to keep themselves from them; also, when they find themselves unaffected at seasons in which, they think, there is the greatest occasion to be affected; and when they feel worldly dispositions working in them, and it may be pride, and envy, and stirrings of revenge, or some ill spirit towards some person that has injured them, as well as other workings of indwelling sin: Their hearts are almost sunk with the disappointment; and they are ready presently to think that all this they have met with is nothing, and that they are mere hypocrites.

They are ready to argue, that if God had indeed done such great things for them, as they hoped, such ingratitude would be inconsistent with it: They cry out of the hardness and

wickedness of their hearts; and say there is so much corruption, that it seems to them impossible that there should be any goodness there: And many of them seem to be much more sensible how corrupt their hearts are, than ever they were before they were converted; and some have been too ready to be impressed with fear, that instead of becoming better, they are grown much worse, and make it an argument against the goodness of their state. But in truth, the case seems plainly to be, that now they feel the pain of their own wound; they have a watchful eye upon their hearts that they do not use to have: They take more notice what sin is there, and sin is now more burdensome to them; they strive more against it and feel more of the strength of it.

They are somewhat surprised that they should in this respect, find themselves so different from the idea that they generally had entertained of godly persons; for though grace be indeed of a far more excellent nature than they imagined, yet those that are godly have much less of it, and much more remaining corruption, than they thought. They never realized it, that persons were wont to meet with such difficulties, after they were once converted. When they are thus exercised with doubts about their state through the deadness of their frames of spirit, as long as these frames last, they are commonly unable to satisfy themselves of the truth of their grace by all their selfexamination. When they hear of the signs of grace, laid down for them to try themselves by, they are often so clouded, that they do not know how to apply them: They hardly know whether they have such and such things in them or no, and whether they have experienced them or not: That which was sweetest and best, and most distinguishing in their experiences, they cannot recover a sense or idea of.... But on a return of the influences of the spirit of God, to revive the lively actings of grace, the light breaks through the cloud, and doubting and darkness soon vanish away.

Persons are often revived out of their dead and dark frames, by religious conversation; while they are talking of divine things, or ever they are aware, their souls are carried away into holy exercises with abundant pleasure. And oftentimes,

while they are relating their past experiences to their Christian brethren, they have a fresh sense of them revived, and the same experiences in a degree, again renewed. Sometimes while persons are exercised in mind with several objections against the goodness of their state, they have scriptures one after another, coming to their minds, to answer their scruples and unravel their difficulties, exceeding apposite and proper to their circumstances; by which means their darkness is scattered; and often before the bestowment of any new remarkable comforts, especially after long continued deadness and ill frames, there are renewed humblings, in a great sense of their own exceeding vileness and unworthiness, as before their first comforts were bestowed.

Many in the country have entertained a mean thought of this great work that there has been amongst us, from what they have heard of impressions that have been made on persons imaginations. But there have been exceeding great misrepresentations, and innumerable false reports, concerning that matter. It is not, that I know of, the profession or opinion of any one person in the town, that any weight is to be laid on any thing seen with the bodily eye: I know the contrary to be a received and established principle amongst us. I cannot say that there have been no instances of persons that have been ready to give too much heed to vain and useless imagination, but they have been easily corrected, and I conclude it will not be wondered at, that a congregation should need a guide in such cases, to assist them in distinguishing wheat from chaff. But such impressions on the imagination as have been more usual, seem to me to be no other than what is to be expected in human nature in such circumstances, and what is the natural result of the strong exercise of the mind, and impressions on the heart.

I do not suppose that they themselves imagined that they saw any thing with their bodily eyes; but only have had within them ideas strongly impressed, and as it were, lively pictures in their minds: As for instance, some when in great terrors, through fear of hell, have had lively ideas of a dreadful furnace. Some when their hearts have been strongly im-

pressed, and their affections greatly moved with a sense of the beauty and excellency of Christ, it has wrought on their imaginations so, that together with a sense of his glorious spiritual perfections, there has risen in the mind an idea of one of glorious majesty, and of a sweet and gracious aspect: So some, when they have been greatly affected with Christ's death, have at the same time a lively idea of Christ hanging upon the cross, and of his blood running from his wounds; which things will not be wondered at by them that have observed how strong affections about temporal matters will excite lively ideas and pictures of different things in the mind.

But yet the vigorous exercise of the mind does doubtless more strongly impress it with imaginary ideas in some than others, which probably may arise from the difference of constitution, and seems evidently in some, partly to arise from their peculiar circumstances: When persons have been exercised with extreme terrors, and there is a sudden change to light and joy, the imagination seems more susceptive of strong ideas, and the inferior powers, and even the frame of the body, is much more affected and wrought upon, than when the same persons have as great spiritual light and joy afterwards; of which it might, perhaps, be easy to give a reason. The forementioned Rev. Messrs. Lord and Owen, who, I believe, are esteemed persons of learning and discretion where they are best known, declared that they found these impressions on persons imaginations, quite different things from what fame had before represented to them, and that they were what none need to wonder at, or be stumbled by, or to that purpose.

There have indeed been some few instances, of impressions on persons' imaginations, that have been something mysterious to me, and I have been at a loss about them; for though it has been exceeding evident to me, by many things that appeared in them, both then (when they related them) and afterwards, that they indeed had a great sense of the spiritual excellency of divine things accompanying them; yet I have not been able well to satisfy myself, whether their imaginary ideas have been more than could naturally arise from their

spiritual sense of things. However, I have used the utmost caution in such cases; great care has been taken both in public and in private, to teach persons the difference between what is spiritual, and what is merely imaginary. I have often warned persons not to lay the stress of their hope on any ideas of any outward glory, or any external thing whatsoever, and have met with no opposition in such instructions. But it is not strange if some weaker persons, in giving an account of their experiences, have not so prudently distinguished between the spiritual and imaginary part; which some, that have not been well affected to religion, might take advantage of.

There has been much talk in many parts of the country, as though the people have symbolized with the Quakers, and the Quakers themselves have been moved with such reports, and came here once and again hoping to find good waters to fish in; but without the least success, and seem to be discouraged, and have left off coming.....There have also been reports spread about the country, as though the first occasion of so remarkable a concern on people's minds here, was an apprehension that the world was near to an end, which was altogether a false report: Indeed after this stirring and concern became so general and extraordinary, as has been related, the minds of some were filled with speculation, what so great a dispensation of divine providence might forebode; and some reports were heard from abroad, as though certain divines and others, thought the conflagration was nigh: But such reports were never generally looked upon worthy of notice.

The work that has now been wrought on souls, is evidently the same that was wrought in my venerable predecessor's days; as I have had abundant opportunity to know, having been in the ministry here two years with him, and so conversed with a considerable number that my grandfather thought to be savingly converted in that time; and having been particularly acquainted with the experiences of many that were converted under his ministry before. And I know no one of them that in the least doubts of its being the same spirit, and the same work. Persons have now no otherwise been sub-

ject to impressions on their imagination than formerly : The work is of the same nature, and has not been attended with any extraordinary circumstances, excepting such as are analogous to the extraordinary degree of it before described..... And God's people that were formerly converted, have now partook of the same shower of divine blessing, in the renewing, strengthening, edifying influences of the Spirit of God, that others have in his converting influences ; and the work here has also been plainly the same with that which has been wrought in those of other places that have been mentioned, as partaking of the same blessing. I have particularly conversed with persons about their experiences, that belong to all parts of the country, and in various parts of Connecticut, where a religious concern has lately appeared ; and have been informed of the experiences of many others by their own pastors.

It is easily perceived by the foregoing account, that it is very much the practice of the people here to converse freely one with another of their spiritual experiences, which is a thing that many have been disgusted at. But however our people may have, in some respects, gone to extremes in it, yet it is doubtless a practice that the circumstances of this town, and neighboring towns, have naturally led them into. Whatsoever people are in such circumstances, where all have their minds engaged to such a degree, in the same affair, that it is ever uppermost in their thoughts, they will naturally make it the subject of conversation one with another when they get together, in which they will grow more and more free : Restraints will soon vanish, and they will not conceal from one another what they meet with. And it has been a practice, which, in the general, has been attended with many good effects, and what God has greatly blessed amongst us : But it must be confessed, there may have been some ill consequences of it, which yet are rather to be laid to the indiscreet management of it, than to the practice itself ; and none can wonder, if, among such a multitude, some fail of exercising so much prudence in choosing the time, manner and occasion of such discourse, as is desirable.

But to give a clearer idea of the nature and manner of the operations of God's spirit, in this wonderful effusion of it, I would give an account of two particular instances. The first is an adult person, a young woman whose name was Abigail Hutchinson. I pitch upon her especially, because she is now dead, and so it may be more fit to speak freely of her than of living instances; though I am under far greater disadvantages on other accounts, to give a full and clear narrative of her experiences, than I might of some others, nor can any account be given but what has been retained in the memories of her near friends and some others, of what they have heard her express in her life time.

She was of a rational, understanding family; there could be nothing in her education that tended to enthusiasm, but rather to the contrary extreme. It is in no wise the temper of the family to be ostentatious of experiences, and it was far from being her temper. She was, before her conversion, to the observation of her neighbors, of a sober and inoffensive conversation, and was a still, quiet, reserved person. She had long been infirm of body, but her infirmity had never been observed at all to incline her to be notional or fanciful, or to occasion any thing of religious melancholy. She was under awakenings scarcely a week, before there seemed to be plain evidence of her being savingly converted.

She was first awakened in the winter season, on Monday, by something she heard her brother say of the necessity of being in good earnest in seeking regenerating grace, together with the news of the conversion of the young woman before mentioned, whose conversion so generally affected most of the young people here. This news wrought much upon her, and stirred up a spirit of envy in her towards this young woman, whom she thought very unworthy of being distinguished from others by such a mercy, but withal it engaged her in a firm resolution to do her utmost to obtain the same blessing; and, considering with herself what course she should take, she thought that she had not a sufficient knowledge of the principles of religion to render her capable of conversion; whereupon she resolved thoroughly to search the scriptures, and

accordingly immediately began at the beginning of the Bible, intending to read it through. She continued thus till Thursday, and then there was a sudden alteration, by a great increase of her concern, in an extraordinary sense of her own sinfulness, particularly the sinfulness of her nature, and wickedness of her heart, which came upon her (as she expressed it) as a flash of lightning, and struck her into an exceeding terror. Upon which she left off reading the Bible in course as she had begun, and turned to the New Testament, to see if she could not find some relief there for her distressed soul.

Her great terror, she said, was that she had sinned against God: Her distress grew more and more for three days, until (as she said) she saw nothing but blackness of darkness before her, and her very flesh trembled for fear of God's wrath; she wondered and was astonished at herself, that she had been so concerned for her body, and had applied so often to physicians to heal that, and had neglected her soul. Her sinfulness appeared with a very awful aspect to her, especially in three things, viz. her original sin, and her sin in murmuring at God's providence, in the weakness and afflictions she had been under, and in want of duty to parents, though others had looked upon her to excel in dutifulness. On Saturday she was so earnestly engaged in reading the Bible, and other books, that she continued in it, searching for something to relieve her, till her eyes were so dim, that she could not know the letters. Whilst she was thus engaged in reading, prayer, and other religious exercises, she thought of those words of Christ, wherein he warns us not to be as the heathen, that think they shall be heard for their much speaking; which, she said, led her to see that she had trusted to her own prayers and religious performances, and now she was put to a nonplus, and knew not which way to turn herself, or where to seek relief.

While her mind was in this posture, her heart, she said, seemed to fly to the minister for refuge, hoping that he could give her some relief. She came the same day, to her brother, with a countenance of a person in distress, expostulating with him, why he had not told her more of her sinfulness,

and earnestly inquiring of him, what she should do. She seemed, that day, to feel in herself an enmity against the Bible, which greatly affrighted her. Her sense of her own exceeding sinfulness continued increasing from Thursday till Monday, and she gave this account of it, that it had been an opinion, which, till now she had entertained, that she was not guilty of Adam's sin, nor any way concerned in it, because she was not active in it; but that now she saw she was guilty of that sin, and all over defiled by it, and that the sin which she brought into the world with her was alone sufficient to condemn her.

On the Sabbath day she was so ill that her friends thought it not best that she should go to public worship, of which she seemed very desirous; but when she went to bed on the sabbathday night, she took up a resolution that she would, the next morning, go to the minister, hoping to find some relief there. As she awaked on Monday morning a little before day, she wondered within herself at the easiness and calmness she felt in her mind, which was of that kind which she never felt before; as she thought of this, such words as these were in her mind; the words of the Lord are pure words, health to the soul, and marrow to the bones; and then these words came to her mind....the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin; which were accompanied with a lively sense of the excellency of Christ, and his sufficiency to satisfy for the sins of the whole world. She then thought of that expression....it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun....which words then seemed to her to be very applicable to Jesus Christ. By these things her mind was led into such contemplations and views of Christ, as filled her exceeding full of joy. She told her brother in the morning that she had seen (i. e. in realizing views by faith) Christ the last night, and that she had really thought that she had not knowledge enough to be converted; but, said she, God can make it quite easy! On Monday she felt all day a constant sweetness in her soul. She had a repetition of the same discoveries of Christ three mornings together, that she had on Monday morning, and much in the same

manner, at each time, waking a little before day, but brighter and brighter every time.

At the last time, on Wednesday morning, while in the enjoyment of a spiritual view of Christ's glory and fulness, her soul was filled with distress for Christless persons, to consider what a miserable condition they were in; and she felt in herself a strong inclination immediately to go forth to warn sinners, and proposed it the next day to her brother to assist her in going from house to house, but her brother restrained her, telling her of the unsuitableness of such a method. She told one of her sisters that day, that she loved all mankind, but especially the people of God. Her sister asked her why she loved all mankind? She replied, because God had made them. After this there happened to come into the shop where she was at work, three persons that were thought to have been lately converted; her seeing them as they stepped in one after another into the door, so affected her, and so drew forth her love to them, that it overcame her, and she almost fainted: And when they began to talk of the things of religion, it was more than she could bear....they were obliged to cease on that account. It was a very frequent thing with her to be overcome with a flow of affection to them that she thought godly, in conversation with them, and sometimes only at the sight of them.

She had many extraordinary discoveries of the glory of God and Christ; sometimes in some particular attributes, and sometimes in many. She gave an account, that once, as those four words passed through her mind, WISDOM, JUSTICE, GOODNESS and TRUTH, her soul was filled with a sense of the glory of each of these divine attributes, but especially the last....Truth, she said, sunk the deepest! and, therefore, as these words passed, this was repeated, TRUTH, TRUTH! Her mind was so swallowed up with a sense of the glory of God's truth and other perfections, that she said, it seemed as though her life was going, and that she saw it was easy with God to take away her life by discoveries of himself. Soon after this she went to a private religious meeting, and her mind was full of a sense and view of the glory of God all the time; and

when the exercise was ended, some asked her concerning what she had experienced; and she began to give them an account, but as she was relating it, it revived such a sense of the same things, that her strength failed, and they were obliged to take her and lay her upon the bed. Afterwards she was greatly affected, and rejoiced with these words, *worthy is the lamb that was slain.*

She had several days together a sweet sense of the excellency and loveliness of Christ in his meekness, which disposed her continually to be repeating over these words, which were sweet to her, MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART, MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART. She once expressed herself to one of her sisters to this purpose, that she had continued whole days and whole nights, in a constant ravishing view of the glory of God and Christ, having enjoyed as much as her life could bear. Once as her brother was speaking of the dying love of Christ, she told him that she had such a sense of it, that the mere mentioning it was ready to overcome her.

Once, when she came to me, she told how that at such and such a time she thought she saw as much of God, and had as much joy and pleasure as was possible in this life, and that yet afterwards God discovered himself yet far more abundantly, and she saw the same things that she had seen before, yet more clearly, and in another and far more excellent and delightful manner, and was filled with a more exceeding sweetness. She likewise gave me such an account of the sense she once had from day to day of the glory of Christ, and of God, in his various attributes, that it seemed to me she dwelt for days together in a kind of beatific vision of God, and seemed to have, as I thought, as immediate an intercourse with him, as a child with a father; and at the same time she appeared most remote from any high thought of herself, and of her own sufficiency, but was like a little child, and expressed a great desire to be instructed, telling me that she longed very often to come to me for instruction, and wanted to live at my house, that I might tell her her duty.

She often expressed a sense of the glory of God appearing in the trees and growth of the fields, and other works of God's

hands. She told her sister that lived near the heart of the town, that she once thought it a pleasant thing to live in the middle of the town; but now, said she, I think it much more pleasant to sit and see the wind blowing the trees, and to behold in the country what God has made. She had sometimes the powerful breathings of the spirit of God on her soul, while reading the scripture, and would express a sense that she had of the certain truth and divinity thereof. She sometimes would appear with a pleasant smile on her countenance, and once when her sister took notice of it and asked why she smiled, she replied, I am brimful of a sweet feeling within! She often used to express how good and sweet it was to lie low before God, and the lower, said she, the better! And that it was pleasant to think of lying in the dust all the days of her life, mourning for sin. She was wont to manifest a great sense of her own meanness and dependance. She often expressed an exceeding compassion, and pitiful love, which she found in her heart towards persons in a Christless condition, which was sometimes so strong, that as she was passing by such in the streets, or those that she feared were such, she would be overcome by the sight of them. She once said, that she longed to have the whole world saved....she wanted, as it were, to pull them all to her....she could not bear to have one lost.

She had great longings to die, that she might be with Christ, which increased till she thought she did not know how to be patient to wait till God's time should come..... But once, when she felt those longings, she thought, with herself, if I long to die, why do I go to physicians?..... Whence she concluded that her longings for death were not well regulated. After this she often put it to herself, which she should choose, whether to live or to die, to be sick or to be well, and she found she could not tell, till at last she found herself disposed to say these words....I am quite willing to live, and quite willing to die....quite willing to be sick, and quite willing to be well; and quite willing for any thing that God will bring upon me! And then, said she, I felt myself perfectly easy, in a full submission to the will of God. She

then lamented much, that she had been so eager in her longings for death, as it argued want of such a resignation to God as ought to be. She seemed henceforward to continue in this resigned frame till death.

After this her illness increased upon her; and once, after she had before spent the greater part of the night in extreme pain, she awaked out of a little sleep with these words in her heart and mouth....I am willing to suffer for Christ's sake....I am willing to spend and be spent for Christ's sake....I am willing to spend my life, even my very life for Christ's sake! And though she had an extraordinary resignation, with respect to life or death, yet the thoughts of dying were exceeding sweet to her. At a time when her brother was reading in Job, concerning worms feeding on the dead body, she appeared with a pleasant smile, and being inquired of about it, she said, it was sweet to her to think of her being in such circumstances. At another time, when her brother mentioned to her the danger there seemed to be that the illness she then labored under, might be an occasion of her death, it filled her with joy that almost overcome her. At another time, when she met a company following a corpse to the grave, she said, it was sweet to her to think, that they would in a little time follow her in like manner.

Her illness, in the latter part of it, was seated much in her throat, and swelling inward filled up the pipe, so that she could swallow nothing but what was perfectly liquid, and but very little of that, and with great and long strugglings and stranglings, that which she took in, flying out at her nostrils, till she at last could swallow nothing at all: She had a raging appetite to food, so that she told her sister, when talking with her about her circumstances, that the worst bit she threw to her swine would be sweet to her; but yet when she saw that she could not swallow it, she seemed to be as perfectly contented without it as if she had no appetite to it. Others were greatly moved to see what she underwent, and were filled with admiration at her unexampled patience. At a time, when she was striving in vain to get down a little food, something liquid, and was very much spent with it, she looked upon her sister

with a smile, saying, O sister, this is for my good! At another time, when her sister was speaking of what she underwent, she told her, that she lived an heaven upon earth for all that. She used sometimes to say to her sister, under her extreme sufferings....It is good to be so! Her sister once asked her, why she said so? Why, says she, because God would have it so: It is best that things should be as God would have them....It looks best to me. After her confinement, as they were leading her from the bed to the door, she seemed overcome by the sight of things abroad, as shewing forth the glory of the Being that had made them. As she lay on her death bed, she would often say these words....God is my friend! And once looking upon her sister, with a smile, said, O sister! How good it is! How sweet and comfortable it is to consider, and think of heavenly things! And used this argument to persuade her sister to be much in such meditations.

She expressed, on her death bed, an exceeding longing, both for persons in a natural state, that they might be converted, and for the godly that they might see and know more of God. And when those that looked on themselves as in a Christless state came to see her, she would be greatly moved with compassionate affection. One, in particular, that seemed to be in great distress about the state of her soul, and had come to see her from time to time, she desired her sister to persuade not to come any more, because the sight of her so wrought on her compassions, that it overcome her nature..... The same week that she died, when she was in distressing circumstances as to her body, some of the neighbors that came to see her, asked if she was willing to die? She replied, that she was quite willing either to live or die....She was willing to be in pain....She was willing to be so always as she was then, if that was the will of God. She willed what God willed. They asked her whether she was willing to die that night? She answered, yes, if it be God's will; and seemed to speak all with that perfect composure of spirit, and with such a cheerful and pleasant countenance, that it filled them with admiration.

She was very weak a considerable time before she died, having pined away with famine and thirst, so that her flesh seemed to be dried upon her bones, and therefore could say but little, and manifested her mind very much by signs. She said she had matter enough to fill up all her time with talk, if she had but strength. A few days before her death, some asked her whether she held her integrity still? Whether she was not afraid of death? She answered to this purpose, that she had not the least degree of fear of death. They asked her why she would be so confident? She answered, if I should say otherwise, I should speak contrary to what I know; there is, says she, indeed a dark entry, that looks something dark, but on the other side there appears such a bright shining light, that I cannot be afraid! She said, not long before she died, that she used to be afraid how she should grapple with death; but, says she, God has shewed me that he can make it easy in great pain. Several days before she died, she could scarcely say any thing but just yes and no, to questions that were asked her, for she seemed to be dying for three days together; but seemed to continue in an admirable sweet composure of soul, without any interruption, to the last, and died as a person, that went to sleep, without any struggling, about noon, on Friday, June 27, 1735.

She had long been infirm, and often had been exercised with great pain; but she died chiefly of famine. It was, doubtless, partly owing to her bodily weakness, that her nature was so often overcome, and ready to sink with gracious affection; but yet the truth was, that she had more grace, and greater discoveries of God and Christ, than the present frail state did well consist with. She wanted to be where strong grace might have more liberty, and be without the clog of a weak body; there she longed to be, and there she doubtless now is. She was looked upon amongst us as a very eminent instance of Christian experience; but this is but a very broken and imperfect account I have given of her: Her eminency would much more appear, if her experiences were fully related, as she was wont to express and manifest them while living. I once read this account to some of her pious neigh-

bors, who were acquainted with her, who said to this purpose, that the picture fell much short of the life, and particularly that it much failed of duly representing her humility, and that admirable lowliness of heart, that at all times appeared in her. But there are, (blessed be God !) many living instances of much the like nature, and in some things no less extraordinary.

But I now proceed to the other instance that I would give an account of, which is of the little child forementioned. Her name is Phebe Bartlet, daughter of William Bartlet. I shall give the account as I took it from the mouths of her parents, whose veracity, none that know them doubt of.

She was born in March, in the year 1731. About the latter end of April, or beginning of May, 1735, she was greatly affected by the talk of her brother, who had been hopefully converted a little before, at about eleven years of age, and then seriously talked to her about the great things of religion. Her parents did not know of it at that time, and were not wont, in the counsels they gave to their children, particularly to direct themselves to her, by reason of her being so young, and, as they supposed not capable of understanding ; but after her brother had talked to her, they observed her very earnestly to listen to the advice they gave to the other children, and she was observed very constantly to retire, several times in a day, as was concluded, for secret prayer, and grew more and more engaged in religion, and was more frequent in her closet, till at last she was wont to visit it five or six times in a day, and was so engaged in it, that nothing would, at any time divert her from her stated closet exercises. Her mother often observed and watched her, when such things occurred, as she thought most likely to divert her, either by putting it out of her thoughts, or otherwise engaging her inclinations, but never could observe her to fail. She mentioned some very remarkable instances.

She once, of her own accord, spake of her unsuccessfulness, in that she could not find God, or to that purpose. But on Thursday, the last day of July, about the middle of the day, the child being in the closet, where it used to retire, its moth-

er heard it speaking aloud, which was unusual, and never had been observed before; and her voice seemed to be as of one exceeding importunate and engaged, but her mother could distinctly hear only these words, (spoken in her childish manner, but seemed to be spoken with extraordinary earnestness, and out of distress of soul) *Pray* BLESSED LORD *give me salvation! I* PRAY, BEG *pardon all my sins!* When the child had done prayer, she came out of the closet, and came and sat down by her mother, and cried out aloud. Her mother very earnestly asked her several times, what the matter was, before she would make any answer, but she continued exceedingly crying, and wreathing her body to and fro, like one in anguish of spirit. Her mother then asked her whether she was afraid that God would not give her salvation. She then answered yes, I am afraid I shall go to hell! Her mother then endeavored to quiet her, and told her she would not have her cry.... she must be a good girl, and pray every day, and she hoped God would give her salvation. But this did not quiet her at all....but she continued thus earnestly crying and taking on for some time, till at length she suddenly ceased crying and began to smile, and presently said with a smiling countenance ...Mother, the kingdom of heaven is come to me! Her mother was surprised at the sudden alteration, and at the speech, and knew not what to make of it, but at first said nothing to her. The child presently spake again, and said, there is another come to me, and there is another...there is three; and being asked what she meant, she answered....One is, thy will be done, and there is another....enjoy him forever; by which it seems that when the child said, there is three come to me, she meant three passages of its catechism that came to her mind.

After the child had said this, she retired again into her closet; and her mother went over to her brother's, who was next neighbor; and when she came back, the child being come out of the closet, meets her mother with this cheerful speech....I can find God now! Referring to what she had before complained of, that she could not find God. Then the child spoke again, and said....I love God! Her mother asked

her how well she loved God, whether she loved God better than her father and mother, she said, yes. Then she asked her whether she loved God better than her little sister Rachel, she answered yes, better than any thing! Then her eldest sister, referring to her saying she could find God now, asked her where she could find God; she answered, in heaven: Why, said she, have you been in heaven? No, said the child. By this it seems not to have been any imagination of any thing seen with bodily eyes that she called God, when she said I can find God now. Her mother asked her whether she was afraid of going to hell, and that had made her cry. She answered, yes, I was; but now I shall not. Her mother asked her whether she thought that God had given her salvation; she answered yes. Her mother asked her, when; she answered, to day. She appeared all that afternoon exceeding cheerful and joyful. One of the neighbors asked her how she felt herself? She answered, I feel better than I did. The neighbor asked her what made her feel better; she answered, God makes me. That evening as she lay a bed, she called one of her little cousins to her, that was present in the room, as having something to say to him; and when he came, she told him that heaven was better than earth. The next day being Friday, her mother asking her her catechism, asked her what God made her for; she answered, to serve him; and added, every body should serve God, and get an interest in Christ.

The same day the elder children, when they came home from school, seemed much affected with the extraordinary change that seemed to be made in Phebe; and her sister Abigail standing by, her mother took occasion to counsel her, now to improve her time, to prepare for another world; on which Phebe burst out in tears, and cried out, poor Nabby! Her mother told her, she would not have her cry, she hoped that God would give Nabby salvation; but that did not quiet her, but she continued earnestly crying for some time; and when she had in a measure ceased, her sister Eunice being by her, she burst out again, and cried, poor Eunice! and cried exceedingly; and when she had almost done, she went into another room, and there looked upon her sister Naomi, and

burst out again, crying poor Amy! Her mother was greatly affected at such a behavior in the child, and knew not what to say to her. One of the neighbors coming in a little after, asked her what she had cried for. She seemed, at first backward to tell the reason: Her mother told her she might tell that person, for he had given her an apple; upon which she said, she cried because she was afraid they would go to hell.

At night a certain minister, that was occasionally in the town, was at the house, and talked considerably with her of the things of religion; and after he was gone, she sat leaning on the table, with tears running out of her eyes; and being asked what made her cry, she said it was thinking about God. The next day being Saturday, she seemed great part of the day to be in a very affectionate frame, had four turns of crying, and seemed to endeavor to curb herself, and hide her tears, and was very backward to talk of the occasion of it. On the sabbath day she was asked whether she believed in God; she answered yes: And being told that Christ was the Son of God, she made ready answer, and said, I know it.

From this time there has appeared a very remarkable abiding change in the child: She has been very strict upon the Sabbath, and seems to long for the sabbath day before it comes, and will often in the week time be inquiring how long it is to the sabbath day, and must have the days particularly counted over that are between, before she will be contented. And she seems to love God's house....is very eager to go thither. Her mother once asked her why she had such a mind to go? Whether it was not to see the fine folks? She said no, it was to hear Mr. Edwards preach. When she is in the place of worship, she is very far from spending her time there as children at her age usually do, but appears with an attention that is very extraordinary for such a child. She also appears, very desirous at all opportunities, to go to private religious meetings, and is very still and attentive at home, in prayer time, and has appeared affected in time of family prayer. She seems to delight much in hearing religious conversation. When I once was there with some others that were strangers, and talked to her something of religion, she

seemed more than ordinarily attentive; and when we were gone, she looked out very wistly after us, and said....I wish they would come again! Her mother asked her why: Said she, I love to hear them talk!

She seems to have very much of the fear of God before her eyes, and an extraordinary dread of sin against him; of which her mother mentioned the following remarkable instance. Some time in August, the last year, she went with some bigger children, to get some plumbs, in a neighbor's lot, knowing nothing of any harm in what she did; but when she brought some of the plumbs into the house, her mother mildly reproved her, and told her, that she must not get plumbs without leave, because it was sin: God had commanded her not to steal. The child seemed greatly surprised, and burst out into tears, and cried out....I will not have these plumbs! And turning to her sister Eunice, very earnestly said to her ....why did you ask me to go to that plumb tree? I should not have gone if you had not asked me. The other children did not seem to be much affected or concerned; but there was no pacifying Phebe. Her mother told her she might go and ask leave, and then it would not be sin for her to eat them, and sent one of the children to that end; and when she returned, her mother told her that the owner had given leave, now she might eat them, and it would not be stealing. This stilled her a little while, but presently she broke out again into an exceeding fit of crying: Her mother asked her what made her cry again? Why she cried now, since they had asked leave? What it was that troubled her now? And asked her several times very earnestly, before she made any answer; but at last, said it was because....BECAUSE IT WAS SIN. She continued a considerable time crying; and said she would not go again if Eunice asked her an hundred times; and she retained her aversion to that fruit for a considerable time, under the remembrance of her former sin.

She, at some times, appears greatly affected and delighted with texts of scripture that come to her mind. Particularly, about the beginning of November, the last year, that text came to her mind, Rev. iii, 20. *Behold I stand at the door and*

knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in, and sup with him and he with me. She spoke of it to those of the family, with a great appearance of joy, a smiling countenance, and elevation of voice, and afterwards she went into another room, where her mother overheard her talking very earnestly to the children about it, and particularly heard her say to them, three or four times over, with an air of exceeding joy and admiration....Why it is to SUP WITH GOD. At some time about the middle of winter, very late in the night, when all were in bed, her mother perceived that she was awake, and heard her as though she was weeping. She called to her, and asked her what was the matter. She answered with a low voice, so that her mother could not hear what she said; but thinking it might be occasioned by some spiritual affection, said no more to her; but perceived her to lie awake, and to continue in the same frame for a considerable time. The next morning she asked her whether she did not cry the last night: The child answered yes, I did cry a little, for I was thinking about God and Christ, and they loved me. Her mother asked her, whether to think of God and Christ's loving her made her cry: She answered yes, it does sometimes.

She has often manifested a great concern for the good of other souls; and has been wont, many times, affectionately to counsel the other children. Once about the latter end of September, the last year, when she and some others of the children were in a room by themselves a husking Indian corn, the child, after a while, came out and sat by the fire. Her mother took notice that she appeared with a more than ordinary serious and pensive countenance, but at last she broke silence, and said, I have been talking to Nabby and Eunice. Her mother asked her what she had said to them. Why, said she, I told them they must pray, and prepare to die, that they had but a little while to live in this world, and they must be always ready. When Nabby came out, her mother asked her whether she had said that to them. Yes, said she, she said that and a great deal more. At other times the child took her opportunities to talk to the other children about the

great concern of their souls; sometimes so as much to affect them, and set them into tears. She was once exceeding importunate with her mother to go with her sister Naomi to pray: Her mother endeavored to put her off, but she pulled her by the sleeve, and seemed as if she would by no means be denied. At last her mother told her, that Amy must go and pray herself; but, says the child, she will not go, and persisted earnestly to beg of her mother to go with her.

She has discovered an uncommon degree of a spirit of charity, particularly on the following occasion: A poor man that lives in the woods, had lately lost a cow that the family much depended on, and being at the house, he was relating his misfortune, and telling of the straits and difficulties they were reduced to by it. She took much notice of it, and it wrought exceedingly on her compassions; and after she had attentively heard him a while, she went away to her father, who was in the shop, and intreated him to give that man a cow; and told him that the poor man had no cow! That the hunters or something else had killed his cow! And intreated him to give him one of theirs. Her father told her that they could not spare one. Then she intreated him to let him and his family come and live at his house; and had much talk of the same nature, whereby she manifested bowels of compassion to the poor.

She has manifested great love to her minister; particularly when I returned from my long journey for my health, the last fall, when she heard of it, she appeared very joyful at the news, and told the children of it with an elevated voice, as the most joyful tidings, repeating it over and over, Mr. Edwards is come home! Mr. Edwards is come home! She still continues very constant in secret prayer, so far as can be observed, (for she seems to have no desire that others should observe her when she retires, but seems to be a child of a reserved temper) and every night before she goes to bed will say her catechism, and will by no means miss of it: She never forgot it but once, and then after she was a bed, thought of it and cried out in tears....I have not said my catechism! And would not be quieted till her mother asked her the catechism as she lay in bed. She sometimes appears to be in doubt

about the condition of her soul, and when asked whether she thinks that she is prepared for death, speaks something doubtfully about it: At other times seems to have no doubt, but when asked, replies yes, without hesitation.

In the former part of this great work of God amongst us, till it got to its height, we seemed to be wonderfully smiled upon and blessed in all respects. Satan (as has been already observed) seemed to be unusually restrained: Persons that before had been involved in melancholy, seemed to be as it were waked up out of it, and those that had been entangled with extraordinary temptations, seemed wonderfully to be set at liberty, and not only so, but it was the most remarkable time of health that ever I knew since I have been in the town. We ordinarily have several bills put up, every sabbath, for persons that are sick, but now we have not so much as one for many sabbaths together. But after this it seemed to be otherwise, when this work of God appeared to be at its greatest height. A poor weak man that belongs to the town, being in great spiritual trouble, was hurried with violent temptations to cut his own throat, and made an attempt, but did not do it effectually. He after this continued a considerable time exceedingly overwhelmed with melancholy, but has now, of a long time, been very greatly delivered, by the light of God's countenance lifted up upon him, and has expressed a great sense of his sin in so far yielding to temptation, and there are in him all hopeful evidences of his having been made a subject of saving mercy.

In the latter part of May, it began to be very sensible that the spirit of God was gradually withdrawing from us, and after this time Satan seemed to be more let loose, and raged in a dreadful manner. The first instance wherein it appeared, was a person's putting an end to his own life, by cutting his throat. He was a gentleman of more than common understanding, of strict morals, religious in his behavior, and an useful, honorable person in the town....But was of a family that are exceeding prone to the disease of melancholy, and his mother was killed with it. He had, from the beginning of this extraordinary time, been exceedingly concerned about the

state of his soul, and there were some things in his experience, that appeared very hopefully, but he durst entertain no hope concerning his own good estate. Towards the latter part of his time, he grew much discouraged, and melancholy grew amain upon him, till he was wholly overpowered by it, and was in great measure, past a capacity of receiving advice, or being reasoned with to any purpose: The devil took the advantage, and drove him into despairing thoughts. He was kept awake a nights, meditating terror, so that he had scarce any sleep at all, for a long time together. And it was observed at last, that he was scarcely well capable of managing his ordinary business, and was judged delirious by the coroner's inquest. The news of this, extraordinarily affected the minds of people here, and struck them as it were with astonishment. After this, multitudes in this and other towns seemed to have it strongly suggested to them, and pressed upon them, to do as this person had done. And many that seemed to be under no melancholy, some pious persons, that had no special darkness or doubts about the goodness of their state, nor were under any special trouble or concern of mind about any thing spiritual or temporal, yet had it urged upon them, as if somebody had spoken to them, *Cut your own throat, now is a good opportunity.* Now! Now! So that they were obliged to fight with all their might to resist it, and yet no reason suggested to them why they should do it.

About the same time, there were two remarkable instances of persons led away with strange enthusiastic delusions: One at Suffield, and another at South Hadley: That which has made the greatest noise in the country was of the man at South Hadley, whose delusion was, that he thought himself divinely instructed to direct a poor man in melancholy and despairing circumstances, to say certain words in prayer to God, as recorded in Psal. cxvi. 4, for his own relief. The man is esteemed a pious man: I have, since this error of his, had a particular acquaintance with him, and, I believe, none would question his piety, that had had such an acquaintance. He gave me a particular account of the manner how he was deluded, which is too long to be here inserted. But, in short,

he was exceedingly rejoiced and elevated with this extraordinary work, so carried on in this part of the country, and was possessed with an opinion that it was the beginning of the glorious times of the church spoken of in scripture: And had read it as the opinion of some divines, that there would be many in these times that should be endued with extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and had embraced the notion; though he had at first no apprehensions that any besides ministers would have such gifts. But he since exceedingly laments the dishonor he has done to God, and the wound he has given religion in it, and has lain low before God and man for it.

After these things the instances of conversion were rare here in comparison of what they had before been, (though that remarkable instance of the little child was after this;) and the spirit of God after that time appeared very sensibly withdrawing from all parts of the country, (though we have heard of its going on in some places of Connecticut, and that it continues to be carried on even to this day.) But religion remained here, and, I believe in some other places, the main subject of conversation for several months after this. And there were some turns, wherein God's work seemed something to revive, and we were ready to hope that all was going to be renewed again; yet in the main there was a gradual decline of that general, engaged, lively spirit in religion, which had been before. Several things have happened since, that have diverted people's minds, and turned their conversation more to other affairs, as particularly his Excellency the Governor's coming up, and the Committee of the General Court, on the treaty with the Indians; and afterwards the Springfield controversy, and since that, our people in this town have been engaged in the building of a new meetinghouse; and some other occurrences might be mentioned, that have seemed to have this effect.

But as to those that have been thought to be converted among us, in this time, they generally seem to be persons that have had an abiding change wrought on them: I have had particular acquaintance with many of them since, and they generally appear to be persons that have a new sense of

things, new apprehensions and views of God, of the divine attributes, and Jesus Christ, and the great things of the gospel: They have a new sense of the truth of them, and they affect them in a new manner; though it is very far from being always alike with them, neither can they revive a sense of things when they please. Their hearts are often touched, and sometimes filled with new sweetnesses and delights; there seems to be an inward ardor and burning of heart that they express, the like to which they never experienced before; sometimes, perhaps, occasioned only by the mention of Christ's name, or some one of the divine perfections: There are new appetites, and a new kind of breathings and pantings of heart, and groanings that cannot be uttered. There is a new kind of inward labor and struggle of soul towards heaven and holiness.

Some that before were very rough in their temper and manners seem to be remarkably softened and sweetened.... And some have had their souls exceedingly filled and overwhelmed with light, love, and comfort, long since the work of God has ceased to be so remarkably carried on in a general way; and some have had much greater experiences of this nature than they had before. And there is still a great deal of religious conversation continued in the town, amongst young and old; a religious disposition appears to be still maintained amongst our people, by their upholding frequent private religious meetings, and all sorts are generally worshipping God at such meetings, on sabbath nights, and in the evening after our public lecture. Many children in the town do still keep up such meetings among themselves. I know of no one young person in the town that has returned to former ways of looseness and extravagancy in any respect, but we still remain a reformed people, and God has evidently made us a new people.

I cannot say there has been no instance of any one person that has carried himself so, that others should justly be stumbled concerning his profession; nor am I so vain as to imagine that we have not been mistaken concerning any that we have entertained a good opinion of, or that there are none that

pass amongst us for sheep, that are indeed wolves in sheep's cloathing, who probably may, some time or other, discover themselves by their fruits. We are not so pure but that we have great cause to be humbled and ashamed, that we are so impure; nor so religious but that those that watch for our halting may see things in us, whence they may take occasion to reproach us and religion; but in the main there has been a great and marvellous work of conversion and sanctification among the people here, and they have paid all due respects to those who have been blest of God to be the instruments of it. Both old and young have shewn a forwardness to hearken not only to my counsels, but even to my reproofs from the pulpit.

A great part of the country have not received the most favorable thoughts of this affair, and to this day many retain a jealousy concerning it, and prejudice against it; I have reason to think that the meanness and weakness of the instrument, that has been made use of in this town, has prejudiced many against it; it does not appear to me strange that it should be so: But yet the circumstance of this great work of God is analogous to other circumstances of it; God has so ordered the manner of the work in many respects, as very signally and remarkably to shew it to be his own peculiar and immediate work, and to secure the glory of it wholly to his own almighty power and sovereign grace. And whatever the circumstances and means have been, and though we are so unworthy, yet so hath it pleased God to work! And we are evidently a people blessed of the Lord! And here in this corner of the world, God dwells, and manifests his glory.

Thus, Reverend Sir, I have given a large and particular account of this remarkable affair, and yet considering how manifold God's works have been amongst us, that are worthy to be written, it is but a very brief one. I should have sent it much sooner, had I not been greatly hindered by illness in my family, and also in myself. It is probably much larger than you expected, and it may be than you would have chosen. I thought that the extraordinariness of the thing, and the innumerable misrepresentations which have gone abroad of it, many of which have, doubtless, reached your ears, made it

necessary that I should be particular. But I would leave it entirely with your wisdom to make what use of it you think best, to send a part of it to England, or all, or none, if you think it not worthy; or otherwise to dispose of it as you may think most for God's glory, and the interest of religion. If you are pleased to send any thing to the Rev. Dr. Guyse, I should be glad to have it signified to him, as my humble desire, that since he, and the congregation to which he preached, have been pleased to take so much notice of us, as they have, that they would also think of us at the Throne of Grace, and seek there for us that God would not forsake us, but enable us to bring forth fruit answerable to our profession, and our mercies, and that our *light may so shine before men, that others, seeing our good works, may glorify our father which is in heaven.*

When first I heard of the notice the Reverend Dr. Watts and Dr. Guyse took of God's mercies to us, I took occasion to inform our congregation of it in a discourse from these words; *A city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid.* And having since seen a particular account of the notice of the Reverend Dr. Guyse, and the congregation he preached to, took of it, in a letter you wrote to my honored uncle Williams, I read that part of your letter to the congregation, and labored as much as in me lay to enforce their duty from it. The congregation were very sensibly moved and affected at both times.

I humbly request of you, Reverend Sir, your prayers for this country, in its present melancholy circumstances, into which it is brought by the Springfield quarrel, which, doubtless, above all things that have happened, has tended to put a stop to the glorious work here, and to prejudice this country against it, and hinder the propagation of it. I also ask your prayers for this town, and would particularly beg an interest in them for him who is,

Honored Sir,

With humble respect,

Your obedient son and servant,

JONATHAN EDWARDS.

NORTHAMPTON, *Nov.* 6, 1736.

THOUGHTS

ON THE

REVIVAL OF RELIGION

IN

NEWENGLAND,

1740.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE occasion of the following treatise, will be seen, in part, in the preceding Narrative. The gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, with which Northampton was so abundantly enriched, and which spread through many towns in its vicinity, were soon followed with a very extensive revival over the land. An extraordinary zeal was excited in many gospel ministers. Itinerants travelled the country and preached daily. They addressed their crowded audiences, not in the dull monotony of a mere moral lecture, but in the demonstration of the Spirit, and with power. Their indefatigable labors were crowned with the most desirable success. Zion put on her robes of salvation. Converts to Jesus were multiplied as the drops of the morning dew. Religion became almost the only subject of concern. Many indulged the hope that the millenial glory was commencing. This glorious work had its opposers. Advantage was taken of the errors of some of its most zealous promoters to cry it down, and render it altogether suspicious. Mr. Edwards's design was to vindicate it, as undoubtedly a work of God, and among the most admirable of his triumphs over the hearts of his enemies; to correct errors which attended it, and to excite augmented efforts for its increase.

The scene which he describes is past. Let it live however in our memories. Let it excite our feryent

gratitude, and call forth the devout aspirations of our souls for the spread of the victories of our glorious King in these days. Let the pertinent and instructive sentiments wrought into the treatise, the most of which are adapted to every condition in which the church and the individual believer can be placed, take deep hold of our hearts and be carried out in their proper effects in our lives.

This work had a second edition in Scotland, soon after it was first published in this country.

THE AUTHOR's PREFACE.

IN the ensuing treatise, I condemn ministers assuming, or taking too much upon them, and appearing as though they supposed that they were the persons, to whom it especially belonged to dictate, direct, and determine; but perhaps shall be thought to be very guilty of it myself: And some, when they read this treatise, may be ready to say that I condemn this in others, that I may have the monopoly of it. I confess that I have taken a great deal of liberty freely to express my thoughts, concerning almost every thing appertaining to the wonderful work of God that has of late been carried on in the land, and to declare what has appeared to me to be the mind of God concerning the duty and obligations of all sorts of persons, and even those that are my superiors and fathers, ministers of the gospel, and civil rulers. But yet I hope the liberty I have taken is not greater than can be justified. In this nation, such liberty of the press is allowed, that every author takes leave, without offence, freely to speak his opinion concerning the management of public affairs, and the duty of the legislature, and those that are at the head of the administration, though vastly his superiors. As now at this day, private subjects offer their sentiments to the public, from the press, concerning the management of the war with Spain; freely declaring what they think to be the duty of the Parliament, and the principal ministers of state, &c. We in Newengland are at this day engaged in a more important war: And I am sure, if we consider the sad jangling and confusion that has attended it, we shall confess that it is highly requisite that some body should speak his mind, concerning the way in which it ought to be managed: And that not only a few of the many particulars, that are the matter of strife in the land, should be debated, on the one side and the other, in pamphlets; (as has of late been done with heat and fierceness enough) which does not tend to bring the contention in general to an end, but rather to inflame it, and increase

the uproar. But that something should be published, to bring the affair in general, and the many things that attend it, that are the subjects of debate, under a particular consideration. And certainly it is high time that this was done. If private persons may speak their minds without arrogance; much more may a minister of the kingdom of Christ speak freely about things of this nature, which do so nearly concern the interest of the kingdom of his lord and master, at so important a juncture. If some elder minister had undertaken this, I acknowledge it would have been more proper; but I have heard of no such thing a doing, or like to be done. I hope therefore I shall be excused for undertaking such a piece of work. I think nothing that I have said can justly be interpreted, as though I would impose my thoughts upon any, or did not suppose that others have equal right to think for themselves, with myself. We are not accountable one to another for our thoughts; but we must all give an account to him who searches our hearts, and has doubtless his eye especially upon us at such an extraordinary season as this. If I have well confirmed my opinion concerning this work, and the way in which it should be acknowledged and promoted, with Scripture and reason, I hope others that read it will receive it, as a manifestation of the mind and will of God. If others would hold forth further light to me in any of these particulars, I hope I should thankfully receive it. I think I have been made in some measure sensible, and much more of late than formerly, of my need of more wisdom than I have. I make it my rule to lay hold of light and embrace it, wherever I see it, though held forth by a child or an enemy. If I have assumed too much in the following discourse, and have spoken in a manner that savors of a spirit of pride, no wonder that others can better discern it than I myself. If it be so I ask pardon, and beg the prayers of every Christian reader, that I may have more light, humility and zeal; and that I may be favored with such measures of the divine Spirit, as a minister of the gospel stands in need of, at such an extraordinary season.

REVIVAL OF RELIGION

IN

NEWENGLAND.

PART I.

Shewing that the extraordinary Work that has of late been going on in this Land, is a glorious Work of GOD.

THE error of those who have had ill thoughts of the great religious operations on the minds of men, that have been carried on of late in Newengland (so far as the ground of such an error has been in the understanding, and not in the disposition) seems fundamentally to lie in three things;

First. In judging of this work *a priori.*

Secondly. In not taking the holy scriptures as an whole rule whereby to judge of such operations.

Thirdly. In not justly separating and distinguishing the good from the bad.

I. They have greatly erred in the way in which they have gone about to try this work, whether it be a work of the Spirit of God or no, viz. in judging of it *a priori;* from the way that it began, the instruments that have been employed, the means that have been made use of, and the methods that have been taken and succeeded, in carrying it on. Whereas, if we duly consider the matter, it will evidently appear that such a work is not to be judged of *a priori*, but *a posteriori:* We are to observe the effect wrought; and if, upon examination of it, it

be found to be agreeable to the word of God, we are bound, without more ado, to rest in it as God's work; and shall be like to be rebuked for our arrogance, if we refuse so to do till God shall explain to us how he has brought this effect to pass, or why he has made use of such and such means in doing of it. Those texts are enough to cause us with trembling to forbear such a way of proceeding in judging of a work of God's Spirit, Isa. xl. 13, 14. "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel? And who instructed him, and who taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?" John iii. 8. "The wind bloweth where it listeth; and thou hearest the sound thereof; but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." We hear the sound, we perceive the effect, and from thence we judge that the wind does indeed blow; without waiting, before we pass this judgment, first to be satisfied what should be the cause of the wind's blowing from such a part of the heavens, and how it should come to pass that it should blow in such a manner, at such a time. To judge *a priori*, is a wrong way of judging of any of the works of God. We are not to resolve that we will first be satisfied how God brought this or the other effect to pass, and why he hath made it thus, or why it has pleased him to take such a course, and to use such and such means, before we will acknowledge his work, and give him the glory of it. This is too much for the *clay* to take upon it with respect to the *Potter*. *God gives not account of his matters: His judgments are a great deep: He hath his way in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known; and who shall teach God knowledge, or enjoin him his way, or say unto him, what doest thou? We know not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so we know not the works of God, who maketh all.* No wonder, therefore, if those that go this forbidden way to work, in judging of the present wonderful operation, are perplexed and confounded. We ought to take heed that we do not expose ourselves to the calamity of those who pried into the ark

of God, when God mercifully returned it to Israel, after it had departe d from them.

Indeed God has not taken that course, nor made use of those means, to begin and carry on this great work, which men in their wisdom, would have thought most advisable, if he had asked their counsel; but quite the contrary. But it appears to me that the great God has wrought like himself, in the manner of his carrying on this work; so as very much to show his own glory, and exalt his own sovereignty, power, and allsufficiency, and pour contempt on all that human strength, wisdom, prudence, and sufficiency that men have been wont to trust, and to glory in; and so as greatly to cross, rebuke, and chastise the pride and other corruptions of men; in a fulfilment of that, Isa. ii. 17. "And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." God doth thus, in intermingling in his providence so many stumbling blocks with this work; in suffering so much of human weakness and infirmity to appear; and in ordering so many things that are mysterious to men's wisdom: In pouring out his Spirit chiefly on the common people, and bestowing his greatest and highest favors upon them, admitting them nearer to himself than the great, the honorable, the rich, and the learned, agreeable to that prophecy, Zech. xii. 7. "The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David, and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, do not magnify themselves against Judah." Those that dwelt in the tents of Judah were the common people, that dwelt in the country, and were of inferior rank. The inhabitants of Jerusalem were their citizens, their men of wealth and figure: And Jerusalem also was the chief place of the habitation or resort of their priests, and Levites, and their officers and judges; there sat the great Sanhedrim. The house of David were the highest rank of all, the royal family, and the great men that were round about the king. It is evident by the context that this prophecy has respect to something further than the saving the people out of the Babylonish captivity.

God in this work has begun at the lower end, and he has made use of the weak and foolish things of the world to carry on his work. The ministers that have been chiefly improved, some of them have been mere babes in age and standing, and some of them, such as have not been so high in reputation among their fellows as many others; and God has suffered their infirmities to appear in the sight of others, so as much to displease them; and at the same time it has pleased God to improve them, and greatly to succeed them, while he has not so succeeded others that are generally reputed vastly their superiors. Yea, there is reason to think that it has pleased God to make use of the infirmities and sins of some that he has improved and succeeded; as particularly their imprudent and rash zeal, and censorious spirit, to chastise the deadness, negligence, earthly mindedness, and vanity, that have been found among ministers, in the late times of general declension and deadness, wherein wise virgins and foolish, ministers and people have sunk into such a deep sleep. These things in ministers of the gospel, that go forth as the ambassadors of Christ, and have the care of immortal souls, are extremely abominable to God; vastly more hateful in his sight than all the imprudence, and intemperate heats, wildness, and distraction (as some call it) of these zealous preachers. A supine carelessness, and a vain, carnal, worldly spirit, in a minister of the gospel, is the worst madness and distraction in the sight of God. God may also make use at this day, of the unchristian censoriousness of some preachers, the more to humble and purify some of his own children and true servants, that have been wrongfully censured, to fit them for more eminent service, and future honor that he designs them for.

II. Another foundation error of those that do not acknowledge the divinity of this work, is not taking the Holy Scriptures as an *whole*, and in itself a sufficient rule to judge of such things by. They that have one certain consistent rule to judge by, are like to come to some clear determination; but they that have half a dozen different rules to make the thing they would judge of agree to, no wonder that instead of

justly and clearly determining, they do but perplex and darken themselves and others. They that would learn the true measure of any thing, and will have many different measures to try it by, and find in it a conformity to, have a task that they will not accomplish.

Those that I am speaking of will indeed make some use of scripture, so far as they think it serves their turn; but do not make use of it *alone*, as a rule sufficient by itself, but make as much, and a great deal more use of other things, diverse and wide from it, to judge of this work by. As particularly,

1. Some make philosophy, instead of the Holy Scriptures, their rule of judging of this work; particularly the philosophical notions they entertain of the nature of the soul, its faculties and affections. Some are ready to say, "There is but little sober, solid religion in this work: It is little else but flash and noise. Religion now a days all runs out into transports and high flights of the passions and affections." In their philosophy, the affections of the soul are something diverse from the will, and not appertaining to the noblest part of the soul, but the meanest principles that it has, that belong to man, as partaking of animal nature, and what he has in common with the brute creation, rather than any thing whereby he is conformed to angels and pure spirits. And though they acknowledge that a good use may be made of the affections in religion, yet they suppose that the substantial part of religion does not consist in them, but that they are rather to be looked upon as something adventitious and accidental in Christianity.

But I cannot but think that these gentlemen labor under great mistakes, both in their philosophy and divinity. It is true distinction must be made in affections or passions. There is a great deal of difference in high and raised affections, which must be distinguished by the skill of the observer. Some are much more solid than others. There are many exercises of the affections that are very flashy, and little to be depended on; and oftentimes there is a great deal that appertains to them, or rather that is the effect of them, that has its seat in animal nature, and is very much owing to the constitution and frame of the body; and that which sometimes more especially ob-

tains the name of passion, is nothing solid or substantial. But it is false philosophy to suppose this to be the case with all exercises of affection in the soul, or with all great and high affections; and false divinity to suppose that religious affections do not appertain to the substance and essence of Christianity: On the contrary, it seems to me that the very life and soul of all true religion consists in them.

I humbly conceive that the affections of the soul are not properly distinguished from the will, as though they were two faculties in the soul. All acts of the affections of the soul are in some sense acts of the will, and all acts of the will are acts of the affections. All exercises of the will are in some degree or other, exercises of the soul's appetition or aversion; or which is the same thing, of its love or hatred. The soul wills one thing rather than another, or chooses one thing rather than another, no otherwise than as it loves one thing more than another; but love and hatred are affections of the soul: And therefore all acts of the will are truly acts of the affections; though the exercises of the will do not obtain the name of passions, unless the will, either in its aversion or opposition, be exercised in a high degree, or in a vigorous and lively manner.

All will allow that true virtue or holiness has its seat chiefly in the heart, rather than in the head: It therefore follows, from what has been said already, that it consists chiefly in holy affections. The things of religion take place in men's hearts, no further than they are *affected* with them. The informing of the understanding is all vain, any farther than it *affects* the heart; or which is the same thing, has influence on the *affections*.

Those gentlemen that make light of these raised affections in religion, will doubtless allow that true religion and holiness, as it has its seat in the heart, is capable of very high degrees, and high exercises in the soul. As for instance; they will doubtless allow that the holiness of the heart or will, is capable of being raised to an hundred times as great a degree of strength as it is in the most eminent saint on earth, or to be exerted in an hundred times so strong and vigorous exercises

of the heart; and yet be true religion or holiness still, but only in an high degree. Now therefore I would ask them, by what name they will call these high and vigorous exercises of the will or heart? Are they not high affections? What can they consist in, but in high acts of love; strong and vigorous exercises of benevolence and complacence; high, exalting and admiring thoughts of God and his perfections; strong desires after God, &c.? And now what are we come to but high and raised affections? Yea, those very same high and raised affections that before they objected against, or made light of, as worthy of little regard?

I suppose furthermore that all will allow that there is nothing but solid religion in heaven: But that there, religion and holiness of heart is raised to an exceeding great height, to strong, high, exalted exercises of heart. Now, what other kinds of such exceeding strong and high exercises of the heart, or of holiness, as it has its seat in their hearts, can we devise for them, but only holy affections, high degrees of actings of love to God, rejoicing in God, admiring of God, &c.? Therefore these things in the saints and angels in heaven, are not to be despised and cashiered by the name of great heats and transports of the passions.

And it will doubtless be yet further allowed, that the more eminent the saints are on earth, and the stronger their grace is, and the higher its exercises are, the more they are like the Saints in heaven; i. e. (by what has been just now observed) the more they have of high or raised affections in religion.

Though there are false affections in religion, and affections that in some respects are raised high, that are flashy, yet undoubtedly there are also true, holy and solid affections; and the higher these are raised, the better: And if they are raised to an exceeding great height, they are not to be thought meanly of or suspected, merely because of their great degree, but, on the contrary, to be esteemed and rejoiced in. Charity or divine love, is in scripture represented as the sum of all the religion of the heart; but this is nothing but an holy *affection*: And therefore in proportion as this is firmly fixed in the soul, and raised to a great height, the more eminent a per-

son is in holiness. Divine love or charity is represented as the sum of all the religion of heaven, and that wherein mainly the religion of the church in its more perfect state on earth shall consist, when knowledge and tongues, and prophesyings shall cease ; and therefore the higher this holy affection is raised in the church of God, or in a gracious soul, the more excellent and perfect is the state of the church, or a particular soul.

If we take the scripures for our rule then, the greater and higher are the exercises of love to God, delight and complacence in God, desires and longings after God, delight in the children of God, love to mankind, brokenness of heart, abhorrence of sin, and self abhorrence for sin ; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, and joy in the Holy Ghost, joy unspeakable and full of glory ; admiring thoughts of God, exulting and glorying in God ; so much the higher is Christ's religion, or that virtue which he and his apostles taught, raised in the soul.

It is a stumbling to some that religious affections should seem to be so powerful, or that they should be so violent (as they express it) in some persons : They are therefore ready to doubt whether it can be the Spirit of God, or whether this vehemence be not rather a sign of the operation of an evil spirit. But why should such a doubt arise from no other ground than this ? What is represented in scripture, as more powerful in its effects, than the spirit of God ?..... Which is therefore called *the power of the Highest*, Luke i. 35. And its saving effect in the soul, called the *power of godliness*. So we read of the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power, 1 Cor. ii. 4. And it is said to operate in the minds of men with the exceeding greatness of divine power, and according to the working of God's mighty power, Eph. i. 19. So we read of the effectual working of his power, Eph. iii. 7. And of the power that worketh in Christians v. 20. And of the glorious power of God in the operations of the spirit, Col. i. 11. And of the work of faith, its being wrought with power, 2 Thes. i. 11, and in 2 Tim. i. 7. The Spirit of God is called the spirit of power, and love, and of a sound mind. So

the spirit is represented by a mighty wind, and by fire, things most powerful in their operation.

2. Many are guilty of not taking the holy scriptures as a sufficient and whole rule, whereby to judge of this work, whether it be the work of God, in that they judge by those things which the scripture does not give as any signs or marks whereby to judge one way or the other, and therefore do in no wise belong to the scripture rule of judging, viz. The effects that religious exercises and affections of mind have upon the body. Scripture rules respect the state of the mind, and persons' moral conduct, and voluntary behavior, and not the physical state of the body. The design of the Scripture is to teach us divinity, and not physic and anatomy. Ministers are made the watchmen of men's souls, and not of their bodies; and therefore the great rule which God has committed into their hands, is to make them divines, and not physicians. Christ knew what instructions and rules his church would stand in need of better than we do; and if he had seen it needful in order to the church's safety, he doubtless would have given ministers rules to judge of bodily effects, and would have told them how the pulse should beat under such and such religious exercises of mind; when men should look pale, and when they should shed tears; when they should tremble, and whether or no they should ever be faint or cry out; or whether the body should ever be put into convulsions: He probably would have put some book into their hands, that should have tended to make them excellent anatomists and physicians: But he has not done it, because he did not see it to be needful. He judged, that if ministers thoroughly did their duty as watchmen and overseers of the state and frame of men's souls, and of their voluntary conduct, according to the rules he had given, his church would be well provided for, as to its safety in these matters. And therefore those ministers of Christ and overseers of souls, that busy themselves, and are full of concern about the involuntary motions of the fluids and solids of men's bodies, and from thence full of doubts and suspicions of the cause, when nothing appears but that the state and frame of their minds, and their voluntary

behavior is good, and agreeable to God's word; I say, such ministers go out of the place that Christ has set them in, and leave their proper business, as much as if they should undertake to tell who are under the influence of the Spirit by their looks, or their gait. I cannot see which way we are in danger, or how the devil is likely to get any notable advantage against us, if we do but thoroughly do our duty with respect to those two things, viz. The state of persons' minds, and their moral conduct, seeing to it that they be maintained in an agreeableness to the rules that Christ has given us. If things are but kept right in these respects, our fears and suspicions arising from extraordinary bodily effects seem wholly groundless.

The most specious thing that is alleged against these extraordinary effects on the body, is, that the body is impaired, and health wronged; and that it is hard to think that God, in the merciful influences of his Spirit on men, would wound their bodies and impair their health. But if it were so pretty commonly, or in multiplied instances, (which I do not suppose it is) that persons received a lasting wound to their health by extraordinary religious impressions made upon their minds, yet it is too much for us to determine that God shall never bring an outward calamity, in bestowing a vastly greater spiritual and eternal good.

Jacob, in doing his duty in wrestling with God for the blessing, and while God was striving with him, at the same time that he received the blessing from God, suffered a great outward calamity from his hand; God impaired his body so that he never got over it as long as he lived: He gave him the blessing, but sent him away halting on his thigh, and he went lame all his life after. And yet this is not mentioned as if it were any diminution of the great mercy of God to him, when God blessed him and he received his name Israel, because as a Prince he had power with God, and had prevailed.

But, say some, the operations of the Spirit of God, are of a benign nature; nothing is of a more kind influence on human nature, than the merciful breathings of God's own Spirit. But it has been a thing generally supposed and allowed in the church of God, till now, that there is such a thing as being

sick of love to Christ, or having the bodily strength weakened by strong and vigorous exercises of love to him. And however kind to human nature the influences of the Spirit of God are, yet nobody doubts but that divine and eternal things, as they may be discovered, would overpower the nature of man in its present weak state; and that therefore the body in its present weakness, is not fitted for the views, and pleasures, and employments of heaven: And that if God did discover but a little of that which is seen by the saints and angels in heaven, our frail natures would sink under it. Indeed I know not what persons may deny now, to defend themselves in a cause they have had their spirits long engaged in; but I know these things do not use to be denied or doubted of. Let us rationally consider what we profess to believe of the infinite greatness of the things of God, the divine wrath, the divine glory, and the divine infinite love and grace in Jesus Christ, and the vastness and infinite importance of the things of eternity; and how reasonable is it to suppose, that if it pleases God a little to withdraw the veil and let in light into the soul, and give something of a view of the great things of another world in their transcendent and infinite greatness, that human nature, that is as the grass, a shaking leaf, a weak withering flower, should totter under such a discovery? Such a bubble is too weak to bear the weight of a view of things that are so vast. Alas! What is such dust and ashes, that it should support itself under the view of the awful wrath or infinite glory and love of Jehovah! No wonder therefore that it is said, no man can see me and live, and flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. That external glory and majesty of Christ which Daniel saw, when there remained no strength in him, and his comeliness was turned in him into corruption, Dan. x. 6, 7, 8. And which the apostle John saw, when he fell at his feet as dead; was but an image or shadow of that spiritual glory and majesty of Christ, which will be manifested in the souls of the saints in another world, and which is sometimes, in some degree, manifested to the soul in this world, by the influences of the Spirit of God. And if the beholding the image, and external representation of this spiritual majesty and glory, did so over-

power human nature, is it unreasonable to suppose that a sight of the spiritual glory itself, which is the substance, of which that was but the shadow, should have as powerful an effect? The prophet Habakkuk, speaking of the awful manifestations God made of his majesty and wrath, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, and at Mount Sinai, where he gave the Law; and of the merciful influence, and strong impression God caused it to have upon him, to the end that he might be saved from that wrath, and rest in the day of trouble; says, Hab. iii. 16. "When I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice, rottenness entered into my bones, I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble." Which is much such an effect as the discovery of the same majesty and wrath, in the same awful voice from Mount Sinai, has had upon many in these days; and to the same purposes, viz. to give them rest in the day of trouble, and save them from that wrath. The psalmist also speaks of very much such an effect as I have often seen on persons under religious affections of late, Psal. cxix. 131. "I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for thy commandments."

God is pleased sometimes in dealing forth spiritual blessings to his people, in some respect to exceed the capacity of the vessel, in its present scantiness, so that he does not only fill it full, but he makes their *cup to run over;* agreeable to Psalm xxiii. 5. And pours out a blessing sometimes, in such a manner and measure that there is not room enough to receive it, Mal. iii. 10, and gives them riches more than they can carry away; as he did to Jehoshaphat, and his people in a time of great favor, by the word of his prophet Jehaziel in answer to earnest prayer, when the people blessed the Lord in the valley of Berachah, 2 Chron. xx. 25, 26. It has been with the disciples of Christ, for a long time, a time of great emptiness upon spiritual accounts; they have gone hungry, and have been toiling in vain, during a dark season, a time of night with the church of God; as it was with the disciples of old, when they had toiled all night for something to eat, and caught nothing, Luke v. 5, and John xxi. 3. But now, the morning being come, Jesus appears to his disciples, and takes

a compassionate notice of their wants, and says to them, *Children, have ye any meat?* And gives some of them such abundance of food, that they are not able to draw their net; yea, so that their net breaks, and their vessel is overloaded, and begins to sink; as it was with the disciples of old, Luke v. 6, 7, and John xxi. 6.

We cannot determine that God never shall give any person so much of a discovery of himself, not only as to weaken their bodies, but to take away their lives. It is supposed by very learned and judicious divines, that Moses's life was taken away after this manner; and this has also been supposed to be the case with some other saints. Yea, I do not see any solid sure grounds any have to determine, that God shall never make such strong impressions on the mind by his Spirit, that shall be an occasion of so impairing the frame of the body, and particularly that part of the body, the brain, that persons shall be deprived of the use of reason. As I said before, it is too much for us to determine, that God will not bring an outward calamity in bestowing spiritual and eternal blessings: So it is too much for us to determine, how great an outward calamity he will bring. If God gives a great increase of discoveries of himself, and of love to him, the benefit is infinitely greater than the calamity, though the life should presently after be taken away; yea though the soul should not immediately be taken to heaven, but should lie some years in a deep sleep, and then be taken to heaven: Or, which is much the same thing, if it be deprived of the use of its faculties, and be unactive and unserviceable, as if it lay in a deep sleep for some years, and then should pass into glory. We cannot determine how great a calamity distraction is, when considered with all its consequences, and all that might have been consequent, if the distraction had not happened; nor indeed whether, (thus considered) it be any calamity at all, or whether it be not a mercy, by preventing some great sin, or some more dreadful thing, if it had not been. It is a great fault in us to limit a sovereign, allwise God, whose judgments are a great deep, and his ways past finding out, where he has not limited himself, and in things, concerning which,

he has not told us what his way shall be. It is remarkable, considering in what multitudes of instances, and to how great a degree, the frame of the body has been overpowered of late, that persons' lives have notwithstanding been preserved, and that the instances of those that have been deprived of reason have been so very few, and those, perhaps, all of them, persons under the peculiar disadvantage of a weak, vapory habit of body. A merciful and careful divine hand is very manifest in it, that in so many instances where the ship has begun to sink, yet it has been upheld, and has not totally sunk. The instances of such as have been deprived of reason are so few, that certainly they are not enough to cause us to be in any fright, as though this work that has been carried on in the country, was like to be of baneful influence; unless we are disposed to gather up all that we can to darken it, and set it forth in frightful colors.

There is one particular kind of exercise and concern of mind, that many have been overpowered by, that has been especially stumbling to some; and that is, the deep concern and distress that they have been in for the souls of others. I am sorry that any put us to the trouble of doing that which seems so needless, as defending such a thing as this. It seems like meer trifling in so plain a case, to enter into a formal and particular debate, in order to determine whether there be any thing in the greatness and importance of the case that will answer, and bear a proportion to the greatness of the concern that some have manifested. Men may be allowed, from no higher a principle than common ingenuity and humanity, to be very deeply concerned, and greatly exercised in mind, at the seeing others in great danger, of no greater a calamity than drowning, or being burnt up in an house on fire. And if so, then doubtless it will be allowed to be equally reasonable, if they saw them in danger of a calamity ten times greater, to be still much more concerned; and so much more still, if the calamity was still vastly greater. And why then should it be thought unreasonable, and looked upon with a very suspicious eye, as if it must come from some bad cause, when persons are extremely concerned at seeing others in very great dan-

ger of suffering the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, to all eternity? And besides it will doubtless be allowed that those that have very great degrees of the Spirit of God, that is a spirit of love, may well be supposed to have vastly more of love and compassion to their fellow creatures, than those that are influenced only by common humanity. Why should it be thought strange that those that are full of the spirit of Christ, should be proportionably, in their love to souls, like to Christ? Who had so strong a love to them and concern for them, as to be willing to drink the dregs of the cup of God's fury for them; and at the same time that he offered up his blood for souls, offered up also, as their high priest, strong crying and tears, with an extreme agony, wherein the soul of Christ was as it were in travail for the souls of the elect; and therefore in saving them he is said to see of the *travail* of his soul. As such a spirit of love to, and concern for souls was the spirit of Christ, so it is the spirit of the church; and therefore the church, in desiring and seeking that Christ might be brought forth in the world, and in the souls of men, is represented, Rev. xii. As a "Woman crying, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." The Spirit of those that have been in distress for the souls of others, so far as I can discern, seems not to be different from that of the apostle, who travailed for souls, and was ready to wish himself accursed from Christ for others. And that of the Psalmist, Psal. cxix. 53. "Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy Law." And v. 136. "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy Law." And that of the prophet Jeremiah. Jer. iv. 19. "My bowels! My bowels! I am pained at my very heart! My heart maketh a noise in me! I cannot hold my peace! Because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war!" And so chap. ix. 1, and xiii. 17, and xiv. 17, and Isa. xxii. 4. We read of Mordecai, when he saw his people in danger of being destroyed with a temporal destruction, Esth. iv. 1. "That he rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and bitter cry. And why then should persons be thought to be distracted, when they

cannot forbear crying out, at the consideration of the misery of those that are going to eternal destruction?

3. Another thing that some make their rule to judge of this work by, instead of the Holy Scriptures, is history, or former observation. Herein they err two ways; *First*, If there be any thing new and extraordinary in the circumstances of this work, that was not observed in former times, that is a rule with them to reject this work as not the work of God. Herein they make that their rule, that God has not given them for their rule; and limit God, where he has not limited himself. And this is especially unreasonable in this case: For whosoever has well weighed the wonderful and mysterious methods of divine wisdom, in carrying on the work of the new creation, or in the progress of the work of redemption, from the first promise of the seed of the woman to this time, may easily observe that it has all along been God's manner to open new scenes, and to bring forth to view things new and wonderful, such as eye had not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered into the heart of man or angels, to the astonishment of heaven and earth, not only in the revelations he makes of his mind and will, but also in the works of his hands. As the old creation was carried on through six days, and appeared all complete, settled in a state of rest on the seventh; so the new creation, which is immensely the greatest and most glorious work, is carried on in a gradual progress, from the fall of man, to the consummation of all things, at the end of the world. And as in the progress of the old creation, there were still new things accomplished; new wonders appeared every day in the sight of the angels, the spectators of that work; while those morning stars sang together, new scenes were opened or things that they had not seen before, till the whole was finished; so it is in the progress of the new creation. So that that promise, Isa. lxiv. 4. "For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him." Though it had a glorious fulfilment in the days of Christ and the apostles, as the words are applied, 1 Cor. ii. 9. Yet it always remains to be fulfilled,

in things that are yet behind, until the new creation is finished, at Christ's delivering up the kingdom to the Father. And we live in those latter days, wherein we may be especially warranted to expect that things will be accomplished, concerning which it will be said, *Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things?*

And besides, those things in this work that have been chiefly complained of as new, are not so new as has been generally imagined: Though they have been much more frequent lately, in proportion to the uncommon degree, extent and swiftness, and other extraordinary circumstances of the work, yet they are not new in their kind; but are things of the same nature as have been found and well approved of in the church of God before, from time to time.

We have a remarkable instance in Mr. Bolton, that noted minister of the church of England, who, being awakened by the preaching of the famous Mr. Perkins, minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, was subject to such terrors as threw him to the ground, and caused him to roar with anguish; and the pangs of the new birth in him were such, that he lay pale and without sense, like one dead; as we have an account in the *fulfilling of the Scripture*, the 5th edition, p. 103, 104.... We have an account in the same page of another, whose comforts under the sunshine of God's presence were so great, that he could not forbear crying out in a transport, and expressing in exclamations, the great sense he had of forgiving mercy and his assurance of God's love. And we have a remarkable instance in the life of Mr. George Trosse, written by himself (who, of a notoriously vicious, profligate liver, became an eminent saint and minister of the gospel) of terrors occasioned by awakenings of conscience, so overpowering the body, as to deprive, for some time, of the use of reason.

Yea, such extraordinary external effects of inward impressions have not only been to be found in here and there a single person, but there have also before now been times wherein many have been thus affected, in some particular parts of the church of God; and such effects have appeared in congregations, in many at once. So it was in the year 1625, in

the west of Scotland, in a time of great outpouring of the Spirit of God. It was then a frequent thing for many to be so extraordinarily seized with terror in the hearing of the word, by the Spirit of God convincing them of sin, that they fell down, and were carried out of the church, who afterwards proved most solid and lively Christians; as the author of the *Fulfilling of the Scripture* informs us, p. 185. The same author in the preceding page, informs of many in France that were so wonderfully affected with the preaching of the gospel, in the time of those famous divines, Farel and Viret, that for a time, they could not follow their secular business. And p. 186, of many in Ireland, in a time of great outpouring of the Spirit there, in the year 1628, that were so filled with divine comforts, and a sense of God, that they made but little use of either meat, drink or sleep, and professed that they did not feel the need thereof. The same author gives an account of very much such things in Mrs. Catherine Brettergh of Lancashire in England, (p. 391, 392) as have been complained of, here amongst us, as wild and distracted: How that after great distress, which very much affected her body, the sweat sometimes bursting out upon her, God did so break in upon her mind with light and discoveries of himself, that she was forced to burst out, crying, "O the Joys, the Joys, the Joys, that I feel in my soul! O they be wonderful, they be wonderful! The place where I now am is sweet and pleasant! How comfortable is the sweetness I feel, that delights my soul! The taste is precious; do you not feel it? Oh so sweet as it is!" And at other times, "O my sweet Saviour, shall I be one with thee, as thou art one with the Father? And dost thou so love me that am but dust, to make me partaker of glory with Christ? O how wonderful is thy love! And oh that my tongue and heart were able to sound forth thy praises as I ought." At another time she burst forth thus; "Yea Lord, I feel thy mercy, and I am assured of thy love! And so certain am I thereof, as thou art that God of truth: Even so certainly do I know myself to be thine, O Lord my God; and this my soul knoweth right well!" Which last words she again doubled. To a grave minister, one Mr. Harrison, then

with her, she said, "My soul hath been compassed with the terrors of death, the sorrows of hell were upon me, and a wilderness of woe was in me; but blessed, blessed, blessed be the Lord my God! He hath brought me to a place of rest, even to the sweet running waters of Life. The way I now go in is a sweet and easy way, strewed with flowers; he hath brought me into a place more sweet than the garden of Eden. O the joy, the joy, the delights and joy that I feel! O how wonderful!"

Great outcries under awakenings were more frequently heard of in former times in the country than they have been of late, as some aged persons now living do testify: Particularly I think fit here to insert a testimony of my honored father, of what he remembers formerly to have heard.

"I well remember that one Mr. Alexander Allyn, a Scots gentleman of good credit, that dwelt formerly in this town, shewed me a letter that came from Scotland, that gave an account of a sermon preached in the city of Edinburgh, (as I remember) in the time of the sitting of the general assembly of divines in that kingdom, that so affected the people, that there was a great and loud cry made throughout the assembly. I have also been credibly informed, and how often I cannot now say, that it was a common thing, when the famous Mr. John Rogers of Dedham in England was preaching, for some of his hearers to cry out; and by what I have heard, I conclude that it was usual for many that heard that very awakening and rousing preacher of God's word, to make a great cry in the congregation."

TIMOTHY EDWARDS.

WINDSOR, *May* 5, 1742.

Mr. Flavel gives a remarkable instance of a man that he knew, that was so wonderfully overcome with divine comforts; which it is supposed he knew, as the apostle Paul knew the man that was caught up to the third heaven. He relates,

That "As the person was travelling alone, with his thoughts closely fixed on the great and astonishing things of another world, his thoughts began to swell higher and higher,

like the water in Ezekiel's vision, until at last they became an overflowing flood: Such was the intenseness of his mind, such the ravishing tastes of heavenly joys, and such his full assurance of his interest therein, that he utterly lost all sight and sense of this world, and the concernments thereof; and for some hours, knew not where he was, nor what he was about: But having lost a great quantity of blood at the nose, he found himself so faint, that it brought him a little more to himself. And after he had washed himself at a spring, and drank of the water for his refreshment, he continued to the end of his journey, which was thirty miles; and all this while was scarce sensible: And says he had several trances of considerable continuance. The same blessed frame was preserved all that night, and in a lower degree, great part of the next day: The night passed without one wink of sleep; and yet he declares he never had a sweeter night's rest in all his life. Still, *adds the story*, the joy of the Lord overflowed him, and he seemed to be an inhabitant of another world. And he used for many years after to call that day one of the days of heaven; and professed that he understood more of the life of heaven by it, than by all the books he ever read, or discourses he ever entertained about it."

There have been instances before now, of persons crying out in transports of divine joy in Newengland. We have an instance in Capt. Clap's memoirs, published by the Rev. Mr. Prince, not of a silly woman or child, but a man of solid understanding, that in a high transport of spiritual joy, was made to cry out aloud on his bed. His words p. 9, are "God's holy spirit did witness, (I do believe) together with my spirit; that I was a child of God, and did fill my heart and soul with such full assurance that Christ was mine, that it did so transport me, as to make me cry out upon my bed, with a loud voice, *He is come, He is come!*"

There has, before now, been both crying out and falling down, in this town under awakenings of conscience, and in the pangs of the new birth, and also in some of the neighboring towns. In one of them, more than seven years ago, was a great number together that cried out and fell down, under con-

victions; in most of which, by good information, was a hopeful and abiding good issue. And the Rev. Mr. Williams of Deerfield gave me an account of an aged man in that town, many years before that, that being awakened by his preaching, cried out aloud in the congregation. There have been many instances in this and some neighboring towns, before now, of persons fainting with joyful discoveries made to their souls: Once several together in this town. And there also formerly have been several instances here, of persons' flesh waxing cold and benumbed, and their hands clinched, yea their bodies being set into convulsions, being overpowered with a strong sense of the astonishingly great and excellent things of God and the eternal world.

Secondly. Another way that some err in making history and former observation their rule to judge of this work, instead of the holy scripture, is in comparing some external, accidental circumstances of this work, with what has appeared sometimes in enthusiasts; and as they find an agreement in some such things, so they reject the whole work, or at least the substance of it, concluding it to be enthusiasm. So, great use has been made to this purpose of many things that are found amongst the Quakers; however totally and essentially different in its nature this work is, and the principles it is built upon, from the whole religion of the Quakers. So, to the same purpose, some external appearances that were found amongst the French prophets, and some other enthusiasts in former times, have been of late trumped up with great assurance and triumph.

4. I would propose it to be considered, whether or no, some, instead of making the scriptures their only rule to judge of this work, do not make their own experience the rule, and reject such and such things as are now professed and experienced, because they never felt them themselves. Are there not many, that chiefly on this ground, have entertained and vented suspicions, if not peremptory condemnations of those extreme terrors, and those great, sudden and extraordinary discoveries of the glorious perfections of God, and of the beauty and love of Christ; and such vehement affections, such high transports

of love and joy, such pity and distress for the souls of others, and exercises of mind that have such great effects on persons bodies, merely, or chiefly, because they knew nothing about them by experience? Persons are very ready to be suspicious of what they have not felt themselves. It is to be feared many good men have been guilty of this error; which yet does not make it the less unreasonable. And perhaps there are some that upon this ground do not only reject these extraordinary things, but all such conviction of sin, and such discoveries of the glory of God, and excellency of Christ, and inward conviction of the truth of the gospel, by the immediate influence of the Spirit of God, that are now supposed to be necessary to salvation.

These persons that thus make their own experiences their rule of judgment, instead of bowing to the wisdom of God, and yielding to his word as an infallible rule, are guilty of casting a great reflection upon the understanding of the most High.

III. Another foundation error of those that reject this work, is their not duly distinguishing the good from the bad, and very unjustly judging of the whole by a part; and so rejecting the work in general, or in the main substance of it, for the sake of some things that are accidental to it, that are evil. They look for more in men that are divinely influenced, because subject to the operations of a good spirit, than is justly to be expected from them for that reason, in this imperfect state, and dark world, where so much blindness and corruption remain in the best. When any profess to have received light, and influence, and comforts from heaven, and to have had sensible communion with God, many are ready to expect that now they appear like angels, and not still like poor, feeble, blind and sinful worms of the dust. There being so much corruption left in the hearts of God's own children, and its prevailing as it sometimes does, is indeed a mysterious thing, and always was a stumbling block to the world; but will not be so much wondered at by those that are well versed in, and duly mindful of, two things, viz. *First*, the word of God, which teaches us the state of true Christians in this world, and

Secondly, their own hearts, at least if they have any grace, and have experience of its conflicts with corruption. They that are true saints are most inexcusable in making a great difficulty of a great deal of blindness, and many sinful errors in those that profess Godliness. If all our conduct, both open and secret, should be known, and our hearts laid open to the world, how should we be even ready to fly from the light of the sun, and hide ourselves from the view of mankind! And what great allowances would it be found that we should need, that others should make for us? Perhaps much greater than we are willing to make for others.

The great weakness of the bigger part of mankind, in any affair that is new and uncommon, appears in not distinguishing, but either approving or condemning all in the lump..... They that highly approve of the affair in general, cannot bear to have any thing at all found fault with; and on the other hand, those that fasten their eyes upon some things in the affair that are amiss, and appear very disagreeable to them, at once reject the whole. Both which errors oftentimes arise from want of persons' due acquaintance with themselves. It is rash and unjust when we proceed thus in judging either of a particular person, or a people, or of such an affair as the present wonderful influence on the minds of the people of this land. Many, if they see any thing very ill in a particular person, a minister or private professor, will at once brand him as an hypocrite. And if there be two or three of a people or society that behave themselves very irregularly, the whole must bear the blame of it. And if there be a few, though it may be not above one in an hundred, that professed, and had a shew of being the happy partakers of what are called the saving benefits of this work, that prove naught, and give the world just grounds to suspect them, the whole work must be rejected on their account; and those in general, that make the like profession must be condemned for their sakes.

So careful are some persons lest this work should be defended, that now they will hardly allow that the influences of the Spirit of God on the heart, can so much as indirectly, and accidentally be the occasion of the exercise of corruption, and

commission of sin. Thus far is true, that the influence of the Spirit of God in his saving operations, will not be an occasion of the increase of the corruption of the heart in general, but on the contrary, of the weakening of it: But yet there is nothing unreasonable in supposing, that at the same time that it weakens corruption in general, it may be an occasion of the turning what is left into a new channel, and so of there being more of some certain kinds of the exercise of corruption than there was before; as that which tends to hinder and stop the course of a stream, if it does not do it wholly, may give a new course to so much of the water as gets by the obstacle. The influences of the spirit, for instance, may be an occasion of new ways of the exercise of *Pride*, as has been acknowledged by orthodox divines in general. That spiritual discoveries and comforts may, through the corruption of the heart, be an occasion of the exercises of spiritual pride, did not use to be doubted of, until now it is found to be needful to maintain the war against this work.

They that will hardly allow that a work of the Spirit of God can be a remote occasion of any sinful behavior or unchristian conduct, I suppose will allow that the truly gracious influences of the Spirit of God, yea and an high degree of love to God, is consistent with these two things, viz. A considerable degree of remaining corruption, and also many errors in judgment in matters of religion, and in matters of practice. And this is all that need to be allowed, in order to its being most demonstratively evident, that a high degree of love to God may accidentally move a person to that which is very wrong, and contrary to the mind and will of God. For a high degree of love to God will strongly move a person to do that which he believes to be agreeable to God's will; and therefore, if he be mistaken, and be persuaded that that is agreeable to the will of God, which indeed is very contrary to it, then his love will accidentally, but strongly, incline him to that, which is indeed very contrary to the will of God.

They that are studied in logic have learned that the nature of the cause is not to be judged of by the nature of the effect, nor the nature of the effect from the nature of the cause, when

the cause is only *causa sine qua non*, or an occasional cause; yea, that in such a case, oftentimes the nature of the effect is quite contrary to the nature of the cause.

True disciples of Christ may have a great deal of false zeal, such as the disciples had of old, when they would have fire called for from heaven to come down on the Samaritans, because they did not receive them. And even so eminently holy, and great, and divine a saint as Moses, who conversed with God from time to time, as a man speaks with his friend, and concerning whom God gives his testimony, that he *was very meek, above any man upon the face of the earth*, yet may be rash and sinful in his zeal, when his spirit is stirred by the hardheartedness and opposition of others, so as to speak very unadvisedly with his lips, and greatly to offend God, and shut himself out from the possession of the good things that God is about to accomplish for his church on earth; as Moses was excluded Canaan, though he had brought the people out of Egypt, Psal. cvi. 32, 33. And men, even in those very things wherein they are influenced by a truly pious principle, yet, through error and want of due consideration and caution, may be very rash with their zeal. It was a truly good spirit that animated that excellent generation of Israel that was in Joshua's time, in that affair that we have an account of in the 22d chapter of Joshua; and yet they were rash and heady with their zeal, to go about to gather all Israel together to go up so furiously to war with their brethren of the two tribes and half, about their building the altar Ed, without first inquiring into the matter, or so much as sending a messenger to be informed. So the Christians that were of the circumcision, with warmth and contention condemned Peter for receiving Cornelius, as we have account, Acts xi. This their heat and censure was unjust, and Peter was wronged in it; but there is all appearance in the story that they acted from a real zeal and concern for the will and honor of God. So the primitive Christians, from their zeal for, and against unclean meats, censured and condemned one another: This was a bad effect, and yet the apostle bears them witness, or at least expresses his charity towards them, that both sides acted from a

good principle, and true respect to the Lord, Rom. xiv. 6.—The zeal of the Corinthians with respect to the incestuous man, though the apostle highly commends it, yet at the same time saw that they needed a caution, lest they should carry it too far, to an undue severity, and so as to fail of Christian meekness and forgiveness, 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and chap. vii. 11, to the end. Luther that great reformer had a great deal of bitterness with his zeal.

It surely cannot be wondered at by considerate persons, that at a time when multitudes all over the land have their affections greatly moved, that great numbers should run into many errors and mistakes with respect to their duty, and consequently into many acts and practices that are imprudent and irregular. I question whether there be a man in Newengland, of the strongest reason and greatest learning, but what would be put to it to keep master of himself, thoroughly to weigh his words, and consider all the consequences of his behavior, so as to behave himself in all respects prudently, if he were so strongly impressed with a sense of divine and eternal things, and his affections so exceedingly moved, as has been frequent of late among the common people. How little do they consider human nature, who look upon it so insuperable a stumbling block, when such multitudes of all kinds of capacities, natural tempers, educations, customs and manners of life, are so greatly and variously affected, that imprudences and irregularities of conduct should abound; especially in a state of things so uncommon, and when the degree, extent, swiftness and power of the operation is so very extraordinary, and so new, that there has not been time and experience enough to give birth to rules for people's conduct, and so unusual in times past, that the writings of divines do not afford rules to direct us in such a state of things?

A great deal of noise and tumult, confusion and uproar, and darkness mixed with light, and evil with good, is always to be expected in the beginning of something very extraordinary, and very glorious in the state of things in human society, or the church of God. As after nature has long been shut up in a cold dead state, in time of winter, when the sun returns in

the spring, there is, together with the increase of the light and heat of the sun, very dirty and tempestuous weather, before all is settled calm, and serene, and all nature rejoices in its bloom and beauty. It is in the new creation as it was in the old, the Spirit of God first moved upon the face of the waters, which was an occasion of great uproar and tumult, and things were gradually brought to a settled state, until at length all stood forth in that beautiful, peaceful order, when the heavens and the earth were finished, and God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good. When God is about to bring to pass something great and glorious in the world, nature is in a ferment and struggle, and the world as it were in travail. As when God was about to introduce the Messiah into the world, and that new and glorious dispensation that he set up, He *shook the heavens and the earth, and shook all nations.* There is nothing that the church of God is in scripture more frequently represented by than vegetables; as a tree, a vine, corn, &c. which gradually bring forth their fruit, and are first green before they are ripe. A great revival of religion is expressly compared to this gradual production of vegetables, Isa. lxi. 11. "As the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations. The church is in a special manner compared to a palmtree, Cant. vii. 7, 8. Exod. xv. 27. 1 Kings, vi. 29. Psal. xcii. 12. Of which tree this peculiar thing is observed, that the fruit of it, though it be very sweet and good when it is ripe, yet before it has had time to ripen, has a mixture of poison.

The weakness of human nature has always appeared in times of great revival of religion, by a disposition to run to extremes and get into confusion; and especially in these three things, enthusiasm, superstition, and intemperate zeal. So it appeared in the time of the reformation, very remarkably; and also in the days of the apostles; many were then exceedingly disposed to lay weight on those things that were very notional and chimerical, giving heed to fables and whimsies, as appears by 1 Tim. i. 4, and iv. 7. 2 Tim. ii. 16, and v. 23,

and Tit. i. 14, and iii. 9. Many, as ecclesiastical history informs us, fell off into the most wild enthusiasm, and extravagant notions of spirituality, and extraordinary illumination from heaven beyond others; and many were prone to superstition, willworship and a voluntary humility, giving heed to the commandments of men, being fond of an unprofitable bodily exercise, as appears by many passages in the apostles writings: And what a proneness then appeared among professors to swerve from the path of duty, and the spirit of the gospel, in the exercises of a rash indiscreet zeal, censuring and condemning ministers and people; one saying, I am of Paul, another I of Apollos, another I of Cephas; judging one another for differences of opinion about smaller matters, unclean meats, holy days and holy places, and their different opinions and practices respecting civil intercourse and communication with their heathen neighbors? And how much did vain jangling and disputing and confusion prevail through undue heat of spirit, under the name of a religious zeal? 2 Tim. vi. 4, 5. 2 Tim. ii. 16, and Tit. iii. 9. And what a task had the apostles to keep them within bounds, and maintain good order in the churches? How often are they mentioning their irregularities? The prevailing of such like disorders seems to have been the special occasion of writing many of their Epistles. The church in that great effusion of the spirit that was then, and the strong impressions that God's people were then under, was under the care of infallible guides, that watched over them day and night; but yet so prone were they, through the weakness and corruption of human nature, to get out of the way, that irregularity and confusion rose in some churches, where there was an extraordinary outpouring of the spirit, to a very great height, even in the apostles' life time, and under their eye. And though some of the apostles lived long to settle the state of things, yet presently after they were dead, the Christian church ran into many superstitions and childish notions and practices, and in some respects into a great severity in their zeal. And let any wise person that has not, in the midst of the disputes of the present day, got beyond the calmness of consideration, impartially consider to

what lengths, we may reasonably suppose, many of the primitive Christians, in their heat of zeal, and under their extraordinary impressions, would soon have gone, if they had had no inspired guides; and whether or no, it is not probable that the church of Corinth in particular, by an increase of their irregularities and contentions, would not in a little time have broke to pieces, and dissolved in a state of the utmost confusion? And yet this would have been no evidence that there had not been a most glorious and remarkable outpouring of the spirit in that city. But, as for us, we have no infallible apostle to guide and direct us, to rectify disorders, and reclaim us when we are wandering; but every one does what is right in his own eyes; and they that err in judgment, and are got into a wrong path continue to wander, till experience of the mischievous issue convinces them of their error.

If we look over this affair, and seriously weigh it in its circumstances, it will appear a matter of no great difficulty to account for the errors that have been gone into, supposing the work in general to be from a very great outpouring of the Spirit of God. It may easily be accounted for, that many have run into great errors, and into just such errors as they have. It is known, that some that have been improved as great instruments to promote this work, have been very young; and how natural is it for such as are themselves newly awaked out of sleep, and brought out of that state of darkness, insensibility and spiritual death, which they had been in ever since they were born; and have a new and wonderful scene opened to them; and have in view the reality, the vastness, and infinite importance, and nearness of spiritual and eternal things; and at the same time are surprised to see the world asleep about them; and have not the advantage of age and experience, and have had but little opportunity to study divinity, or to converse with aged experienced Christians and divines; I say, how natural it is for such to fall into many errors with respect to the state of mankind, with which they are so surprised, and with respect to the means and methods of their relief? Is it any wonder that they have not at once learned how to make all the allowances that are to be made, and

that they do not at once find out that method of dealing with the world, that is adapted to the mysterious state and nature of mankind? Is it any wonder that they cannot at once foresee what the consequences of things will be, what evils are to be guarded against, and what difficulties are like to arise, that are to be provided for?

We have long been in a strange stupor; the influences of the Spirit of God upon the heart have been but little felt, and the nature of them but little taught; so that they are in many respects new to great numbers of those that have lately fallen under them. And is it any wonder that they that never before had experience of the supernatural influence of the divine spirit upon their souls, and never were instructed in the nature of these influences, do not so well know how to distinguish one extraordinary new impression from another, and so (to themselves insensibly) run into enthusiasm, taking every strong impulse or impression to be divine? How natural is it to suppose, that among the multitudes of illiterate people (most of which are in their youth) that find themselves so wonderfully changed, and brought into such new, and before (to them) almost unheard of circumstances, that many should pass wrong, and very strange judgments of both persons and things that are about them; and that now they behold them in such a new light, they in their surprise should go further from the judgment that they were wont to make of them than they ought, and in their great change of sentiments, should pass from one extreme to another? And why should it be thought strange, that those that scarce ever heard of any such thing as an outpouring of the Spirit of God before; or if they did, had no notion of it; do not know how to behave themselves in such a new and strange state of things? And is it any wonder that they are ready to hearken to those that have instructed them, that have been the means of delivering them from such a state of death and misery as they were in before, or have a name for being the happy instruments of promoting the same work among others? Is it unaccountable that persons in these circumstances are ready to receive every thing they say, and to drink down error as well as truth from them?

And why should there be all indignation and no compassion towards those that are thus misled?

When these persons are extraordinarily affected with a new sense, and recent discovery they have received, of the greatness and excellency of the divine being, the certainty and infinite importance of eternal things, the preciousness of souls, and the dreadful danger and madness of mankind, together with a great sense of God's distinguishing kindness and love to them; no wonder that now they think they must exert themselves, and do something extraordinary for the honor of God and the good of the souls of their fellow creatures, and know not how to sit still, and forbear speaking and acting with uncommon earnestness and vigor. And in these circumstances, if they be not persons of more than common steadiness and discretion, or have not some person of wisdom to direct them, it is a wonder if they do not proceed without due caution, and do things that are irregular, and that will, in the issue, do much more hurt than good.

Censuring others is the worst disease with which this affair has been attended: But yet such a time as this is indeed a time of great temptation to this sinful error. When there has been such a time of great and long continued deadness, and many are brought out of a state of nature into a state of grace, in so extraordinary a manner, and filled with such uncommon degrees of light, it is natural for such to form their notions of a state of grace wholly from what they experience; many of them know no other way; for they never have been taught much about a state of grace, and the different degrees of grace, and the degrees of darkness and corruption that grace is consistent with, nor concerning the manner of the influences of the spirit in converting a soul, and the variety of the manner of his operations: They therefore forming their idea of a state of grace only by their own experience, no wonder that it appears an insuperable difficulty to them to reconcile such a state, of which they have this idea, with what they observe in professors that are about them. It is indeed in itself a very great mystery, that grace should be consistent with so much and such kind of corruption as sometimes prevails in

the truly godly; and no wonder that it especially appears so to uninstructed new converts, that have been converted in an extraordinary manner.

Though censoriousness be a thing that is very sinful, and is most commonly found in hypocrites and persons of a pharisaical spirit, yet it is not so inconsistent with true Godliness as some imagine. We have remarkable instances of it in those holy men that we have an account of in the book of Job: Not only were Job's three friends, that seem to have been eminently holy men, guilty of it in very unreasonably censuring the best man on earth, very positively determining that he was an unconverted man; but Job himself, that was not only a man of true piety, but excelled all men in piety, and particularly excelled in a humble, meek and patient spirit, was guilty of bitterly censuring his three friends, as wicked, vile hypocrites: Job. xvi. 9, 10, 11. "He teareth me in his wrath who hateth me, he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me: They have gaped upon me with their mouth. God hath delivered me to the ungodly and turned me over into the hands of the wicked." So he is very positive in it that they are hypocrites, and shall be miserably destroyed as such, in the next chapter, ver. 2, 3, 4. "Are there not mockers with me? And doth not mine eye continue in their provocation? Lay down now, put me in surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me? For thou hast hid their heart from understanding: Therefore shalt thou not exalt them." And again, ver. 8, 9, 10. "Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite: The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger. But as for you all, do you return and come now: For I cannot find one wise man (i. e. one good man) among you."

Thus I think the errors and irregularities that attend this work, may be accounted for, from the consideration of the infirmity and weakness and common corruption of mankind, together with the circumstances of the work, though we should suppose it to be the work of God. And it would not be a just

objection in any to say, if these powerful impressions and great affections are from the Spirit of God, why does not the same spirit give strength of understanding and capacity in proportion, to those persons that are the subjects of them; so that strong affections may not, through their error, drive them to an irregular and sinful conduct? For I do not know that God has any where obliged himself to do it. The end of the influences of God's Spirit is to make men spiritually knowing, wise to salvation, which is the most excellent wisdom; and he has also appointed means for our gaining such degrees of other knowledge as we need, to conduct ourselves regularly, which means should be carefully used: But the end of the influence of the Spirit of God is not to increase men's natural capacities, nor has God obliged himself immediately to increase civil prudence in proportion to the degrees of spiritual light.

If we consider the errors that attend this work, not only as from man, and his infirmity, but also as from God, and by his permission and disposal, they are not strange, upon the supposition of its being, as to the substance of it, a work of God. If God intends this great revival of religion to be the dawning, or a forerunner of an happy state of his church on earth, it may be an instance of the divine wisdom, in the beginning of it, to suffer so many irregularities and errors in conduct, to which he knew men, in their present weak state, were most exposed, under great religious affections, and when animated with great zeal. For it will be very likely to be of excellent benefit to his church, in the continuance and progress of the work afterwards: Their experience in the first setting out, of the mischievous consequences of these errors, and smarting for them in the beginning, may be an happy defence to them afterwards, for many generations, from these errors, which otherwise they might continually be exposed to. As when David and all Israel went about to bring back the ark into the midst of the land, after it had been long absent, first in the land of the Philistines, and then in Kirjathjearim, in the utmost borders of the land; they at first sought not the Lord after the due order, and they smarted for their error;

but this put them upon studying the law, and more thoroughly acquainting themselves with the mind and will of God, and seeking and serving him with greater circumspection; and the consequence was glorious, viz. their seeking God in such a manner as was accepted of him; and the ark of God's ascending into the heights of Zion, with those great and extraordinary rejoicings of the king and all the people, without any frown or rebuke from God intermixed; and God's dwelling thenceforward in the midst of the people, to those glorious purposes that are expressed in the 68th Psalm.

And it is very analogous to the manner of God's dealing with his people, to permit a great deal of error, and suffer the infirmity of his people much to appear, in the beginning of a glorious work of his grace for their felicity, to teach them what they be, to humble them, and fit them for that glorious prosperity he is about to advance them to, and the more to secure to himself the honor of such a glorious work: For by man's exceeding weakness appearing in the beginning of it, it is evident that God does not lay the foundation of it in man's strength or wisdom.

And as we need not wonder at the errors that attend this work, if we look at the hand of men that are guilty of them, and the hand of God in permitting them, so neither shall we see cause to wonder at them, if we consider them with regard to the hand that Satan has in them. For as the work is much greater than any other outpouring of the spirit that ever has been in Newengland, so no wonder that the devil is more alarmed and enraged, and exerts himself more vigorously against it, and does more powerfully endeavor to tempt and mislead those that are the subjects of it, or are its promoters.

Whatever imprudences there have been, and whatever sinful irregularities; whatever vehemence of the passions, and heats of the imagination, transports and ecstacies; and whatever error in judgment, and indiscreet zeal; and whatever outcries, and faintings, and agitations of body; yet it is manifest and notorious, that there has been of late a very uncommon influence upon the minds of a very great part of the inhabitants of Newengland, from one end of the land to the

ether, that has been attended with the following effects, viz. a great increase of a spirit of seriousness, and sober consideration of the things of the eternal world; a disposition to hearken to any thing that is said of things of this nature, with attention and affection; a disposition to treat matters of religion with solemnity, and as matters of great importance; a disposition to make these things the subject of conversation; and a great disposition to hear the word of God preached, and to take all opportunities in order to it; and to attend on the public worship of God, and all external duties of religion in a more solemn and decent manner; so that there is a remarkable and general alteration in the face of Newengland in these respects: Multitudes in all parts of the land, of vain, thoughtless, regardless persons are quite changed, and become serious and considerate: There is a vast increase of concern for the salvation of the precious soul, and of that inquiry, *What shall I do to be saved?* The hearts of multitudes have been greatly taken off from the things of the world, its profits, pleasures and honors; and there has been a great increase of sensibleness and tenderness of conscience: Multitudes in all parts have had their consciences awakened, and have been made sensible of the pernicious nature and consequences of sin, and what a dreadful thing it is to lie under guilt and the displeasure of God, and to live without peace and reconciliation with him: They have also been awakened to a sense of the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the reality of another world and future judgment, and of the necessity of an interest in Christ: They are more afraid of sin, more careful and inquisitive that they may know what is contrary to the mind and will of God, that they may avoid it, and what he requires of them that they may do it; more careful to guard against temptations, more watchful over their own hearts, earnestly desirous of being informed what are the means that God has directed to, for their salvation, and diligent in the use of the means that God has appointed in his word, in order to it.... Many very stupid, senseless sinners, and persons of a vain mind, have been greatly awakened. There is a strange alteration almost all over Newengland amongst young people;

By a powerful, invisible influence on their minds, they have been brought to forsake those things in a general way, as it were at once, that they were extremely fond of, and greatly addicted to, and that they seemed to place the happiness of their lives in, and that nothing before could induce them to forsake; as their frolicking, vain company keeping, night walking, their mirth and jollity, their impure language, and lewd songs: In vain did ministers preach against those things before, and in vain were laws made to restrain them, and in vain was all the vigilance of magistrates and civil officers; but now they have almost every where dropped them as it were of themselves. And there is a great alteration amongst old and young as to drinking, tavern haunting, profane speaking, and extravagance in apparel. Many notoriously vicious persons have been reformed, and become externally quite new creatures: Some that are wealthy, and of a fashionable, gay education; some great beaus and fine ladies, that seemed to have their minds swallowed up with nothing but the vain shews and pleasures of the world, have been wonderfully altered, and have relinquished these vanities, and are become serious, mortified and humble in their conversation. It is astonishing to see the alteration that is in some towns, where before was but little appearance of religion, or any thing but vice and vanity: And so remote was all that was to be seen or heard amongst them from any thing that savored of vital piety or serious religion, or that had any relation to it, that one would have thought, if they had judged only by what appeared in them, that they had been some other species from the serious and religious, which had no concern with another world, and whose natures were not made capable of those things that appertain to Christian experience, and pious conversation; especially was it thus among young persons: And now they are transformed into another sort of people; their former vain, worldly and vicious conversation and dispositions seem to be forsaken, and they are as it were, gone over to a new world: Their thoughts, and their talk, and their concern, affections, and inquiries, are now about the favor of God, an interest in Christ, a renewed sanctified heart, and a spiritual

blessedness, and acceptance and happiness in a future world. And through the greater part of Newengland, the Holy Bible is in much greater esteem and use than it used to be; the great things that are contained in it are much more regarded, as things of the greatest consequence, and are much more the subjects of meditation and conversation; and other books of piety that have long been of established reputation, as the most excellent, and most tending to promote true godliness, have been abundantly more in use: The Lord's day is more religiously and strictly observed: And abundance has been lately done at making up differences, and confessing faults one to another, and making restitution; probably more within these two years, than was done in thirty years before: It has been so undoubtedly in many places. And surprising has been the power of that spirit that has been poured out on the land, in many instances, to destroy old grudges, and make up long continued breaches, and to bring those that seemed to be in a confirmed irreconcileable alienation, to embrace each other in a sincere and entire amity.

Great numbers under this influence have been brought to a deep sense of their own sinfulness and vileness; the sinfulness of their lives, the heinousness of their disregard of the authority of the great God, and the heniousness of their living in contempt of a Saviour: They have lamented their former negligence of their souls, and neglecting and losing precious time. Their sins of life have been extraordinarily set before them; and they have also had a great sense of their sins of heart; their hardness of heart, and enmity against that which is good, and proneness to all evil; and also of the worthlessness of their own religious performances, how unworthy their prayers, praises, and all that they did in religion, was to be regarded of God: And it has been a common thing that persons have had such a sense of their own sinfulness, that they have thought themselves to be the worst of all, and that none ever was so vile as they: And many seem to have been greatly convinced that they were utterly unworthy of any mercy at the hands of God, however miserable they were, and though they stood in extreme necessity of mercy; and that they de-

served nothing but eternal burnings: And have been sensible that God would be altogether just and righteous in inflicting endless damnation upon them, at the same time that they have had an exceeding affecting sense of the dreadfulness of such endless torments, and have apprehended themselves to be greatly in danger of them. And many have been deeply affected with a sense of their own ignorance and blindness, and exceeding helplessness, and so of their extreme need of the divine pity and help. And so far as we are worthy to be credited one by another, in what we say, (and persons of good understanding and sound mind, and known and experienced probity, have a right to be believed by their neighbors, when they speak of things that fall under their observation and experience) multitudes in *Newengland* have lately been brought to a new and great conviction of the truth and certainty of the things of the gospel; to a firm persuasion that Christ Jesus is the son of God, and the great and only Saviour of the world; and that the great doctrines of the gospel touching reconciliation by his blood, and acceptance in his righteousness, and eternal life and salvation through him, are matters of undoubted truth; together with a most affecting sense of the excellency and sufficiency of this Saviour, and the glorious wisdom and grace of God shining in this way of salvation; and of the wonders of Christ's dying love, and the sincerity of Christ in the invitations of the gospel, and a consequent affiance and sweet rest of soul in Christ, as a glorious Saviour, a strong rock and high tower, accompanied with an admiring and exalting apprehension of the glory of the divine perfections, God's majesty, holiness, sovereign grace, &c. with a sensible, strong and sweet love to God, and delight in him, far surpassing all temporal delights, or earthly pleasures; and a rest of soul in him as a portion and the fountain of all good, attended with an abhorrence of sin, and selfloathing for it, and earnest longings of soul after more holiness and conformity to God, with a sense of the great need of God's help in order to holiness of life; together with a most dear love to all that are supposed to be the children of God, and a love to mankind in general, and a most sensible and tender compassion for the souls of sinners,

and earnest desires of the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. And these things have appeared to be in many of them abiding, now for many months, yea, more than a year and half; with an abiding concern to live an holy life, and great complaints of remaining corruption, longing to be more free from the body of sin and death. And not only do these effects appear in new converts, but great numbers of those that were formerly esteemed the most sober and pious people, have, under the influence of this work, been greatly quickened, and their hearts renewed with greater degrees of light, renewed repentance and humiliation, and more lively exercises of faith, love and joy in the Lord. Many, as I am well knowing, have of late been remarkably engaged to watch, and strive, and fight against sin, and cast out every idol, and sell all for Christ, and give up themselves entirely to God, and make a sacrifice of every wordly and carnal thing to the welfare and prosperity of their souls. And there has of late appeared in some places an unusual disposition to bind themselves to it in a solemn covenant with God. And now instead of meetings at taverns and drinking houses, and meetings of young people in frolics and vain company, the country is full of meetings of all sorts and ages of persons, young and old, men, women and little children, to read and pray, and sing praises, and to converse of the things of God and another world. In very many places the main of the conversation in all companies turns on religion, and things of a spiritual nature. Instead of vain mirth amongst young people, there is now either mourning under a sense of the guilt of sin, or holy rejoicing in Christ Jesus; and instead of their lewd songs, are now to be heard from them, songs of praise to God, and the Lamb that was slain to redeem them by his blood. And there has been this alteration abiding on multitudes all over the land, for a year and an half, without any appearance of a disposition to return to former vice and vanity. And under the influences of this work, there have been many of the remains of those wretched people and dregs of mankind, the poor Indians, that seemed to be next to a state of brutality, and with whom, till now, it seemed to be to little more purpose to use endeavors for their instruc-

tion and awakening, than with the beasts; whose minds have now been strangely opened to receive instruction, and have been deeply affected with the concerns of their precious souls, and have reformed their lives, and forsaken their former stupid, barbarous and brutish way of living; and particularly that sin to which they have been so exceedingly addicted, their drunkenness; and are become devout and serious persons; and many of them to appearance brought truly and greatly to delight in the things of God, and to have their souls very much engaged and entertained with the great things of the gospel. And many of the poor negroes also have been in like manner wrought upon and changed. And the souls of very many little children have been remarkably enlightened, and their hearts wonderfully affected and enlarged, and their mouths opened, expressing themselves in a manner far beyond their years, and to the just astonishment of those that have heard them; and some of them from time to time, for many months, greatly and delightfully affected with the glory of divine things, and the excellency and love of the Redeemer, with their hearts greatly filled with love to and joy in him, and have continued to be serious and pious in their behavior.

The divine power of this work has marvellously appeared in some instances I have been acquainted with, in supporting and fortifying the heart under great trials, such as the death of children, and extreme pain of body; wonderfully maintaining the serenity, calmness and joy of the soul, in an immoveable rest in God, and sweet resignation to him. There also have been instances of some that have been the subjects of this work, that under the blessed influences of it, have, in such a calm, bright and joyful frame of mind, been carried through the valley of the shadow of death.

And now let us consider ..... Is it not strange that in a Christian, orthodox country, and such a land of light as this is, there should be many at a loss whose work this is, whether the work of God or the work of the devil? Is it not a shame to Newengland that such a work should be much doubted of here? Need we look over the histories of all past times, to see, if there be not some circumstances and external appearances

that attend this work, that have been formerly found amongst enthusiasts? Whether the Montanists had not great transports of joy, and whether the French Prophets had not agitations of body? Blessed be God! He does not put us to the toil of such inquiries. We need not say, who shall ascend into heaven, to bring us down something whereby to judge of this work? Nor does God send us beyond the seas, nor into past ages, to obtain a rule that shall determine and satisfy us. But we have a rule near at hand, a sacred book that God himself has put into our hands, with clear and infallible marks, sufficient to resolve us in things of this nature; which book I think we must reject, not only in some particular passages, but in the substance of it, if we reject such a work as has now been described, as not being the work of God. The whole tenor of the gospel proves it; all the notion of religion that the scripture gives us confirms it.

I suppose there is scarcely a minister in this land, but from sabbath to sabbath used to pray that God would pour out his spirit, and work a reformation and revival of religion in the country, and turn us from our intemperance, profaneness, uncleanness, worldliness and other sins; and we have kept from year to year days of public fasting and prayer to God, to acknowledge our backslidings, and humble ourselves for our sins, and to seek of God forgiveness and reformation: And now when so great and extensive a reformation is so suddenly and wonderfully accomplished, in those very things that we have sought to God for, shall we not acknowledge it? Or when we do, do it with great coldness, caution and reserve, and scarcely take any notice of it in our public prayers and praises, or mention it but slightly and cursorily, and in such a manner as carries an appearance as though we would contrive to say as little of it as ever we could, and were glad to pass from it? And that because, (although, indeed there be such a work attended with all these glorious effects, yet) the work is attended with a mixture of error, imprudences, darkness and sin; because some persons are carried away with impressions, and are indiscreet, and too censorious with their zeal; and because there are high transports of religious affec-

tion ; and because of some effects on persons bodies that we do not understand the reason of?

I have been particularly acquainted with many persons that have been the subjects of the high and extraordinary transports of the present day ; and in the highest transports of any of the instances that I have been acquainted with, and where the affections of admiration, love and joy, so far as another could judge, have been raised to a higher pitch than in any other instances I have observed or been informed of, the following things have been united, viz. a very frequent dwelling for some considerable time together, in such views of the glory of the divine perfections, and Christ's excellencies, that the soul in the mean time has been as it were perfectly overwhelmed, and swallowed up with light and love, and a sweet solace, rest and joy of soul, that was altogether unspeakable ; and more than once continuing for five or six hours together, without any interruption, in that clear and lively view or sense of the infinite beauty and amiableness of Christ's person, and the heavenly sweetness of his excellent and transcendent love ; so that (to use the person's own expressions) the soul remained in a kind of heavenly elysium, and did as it were swim in the rays of Christ's love, like a little mote swimming in the beams of the sun, or streams of his light that come in at a window ; and the heart was swallowed up in a kind of glow of Christ's love, coming down from Christ's heart in heaven, as a constant stream of sweet light, at the same time the soul all flowing out in love to him ; so that there seemed to be a constant flowing and reflowing from heart to heart: The soul dwelt on high, and was lost in God, and seemed almost to leave the body ; dwelling in a pure delight that fed and satisfied the soul ; enjoying pleasure without the least sting, or any interruption ; a sweetness that the soul was lost in ; so that (so far as the judgment, and word of a person of discretion may be taken, speaking upon the most deliberate consideration) what was enjoyed in each single minute of the whole space, which was many hours, was undoubtedly worth more than all the outward comfort and pleasure of the whole life put together ; and this without being in any trance, or being

at all deprived of the exercise of the bodily senses: And the like heavenly delight and unspeakable joy of soul, enjoyed from time to time, for years together; though not frequently so long together, to such an height: Extraordinary views of divine things, and religious affections, being frequently attended with very great effects on the body, nature often sinking under the weight of divine discoveries, the strength of the body taken away, so as to deprive of all ability to stand or speak; sometimes the hands clinched, and the flesh cold, but senses still remaining; animal nature often in a great emotion and agitation, and the soul very often, of late, so overcome with great admiration, and a kind of omnipotent joy, as to cause the person (wholly unavoidably) to leap with all the might, with joy and mighty exultation of soul; the soul at the same time being so strongly drawn towards God and Christ in heaven, that it seemed to the person as though soul and body would, as it were of themselves, of necessity mount up, leave the earth and ascend thither. These effects on the body did not begin now in this wonderful season, that they should be owing to the influence of the example of the times, but about seven years ago; and began in a much higher degree, and greater frequency, near three years ago, when there was no such enthusiastical season, as many account this, but it was a very dead time through the land: They arose from no distemper catched from Mr. Whitefield, or Mr. Tennent, because they began before either of them came into the country; they began as I said, near three years ago, in a great increase, upon an extraordinary self dedication, and renunciation of the world, and resignation of all to God, made in a great view of God's excellency, and high exercise of love to him, and rest and joy in him; since which time they have been very frequent; and began in a yet higher degree, and greater frequency, about a year and an half ago, upon another new resignation of all to God, with a yet greater fervency and delight of soul; since which time the body has been very often fainting, with the love of Christ; and began in a much higher degree still, the last winter, upon another resignation and acceptance of God, as the only portion and happiness of

the soul, wherein the whole world, with the dearest enjoyments in it, were renounced as dirt and dung, and all that is pleasant and glorious, and all that is terrible in this world, seemed perfectly to vanish into nothing, and nothing to be left but God, in whom the soul was perfectly swallowed up, as in an infinite ocean of blessedness: Since which time there have often been great agitations of body, and an unavoidable leaping for joy; and the soul as it were dwelling almost without interruption, in a kind of paradise; and very often, in high transports, disposed to speak of those great and glorious things of God and Christ, and the eternal world, that are in view, to others that are present, in a most earnest manner, and with a loud voice, so that it is next to impossible to avoid it: These effects on the body not arising from any bodily distemper or weakness, because the greatest of all have been in a good state of health. This great rejoicing has been a rejoicing with trembling, i. e. attended with a deep and lively sense of the greatness and majesty of God, and the person's own exceeding littleness and vileness: Spiritual joys in this person never were attended, either formerly or lately, with the least appearance of any laughter or lightness of countenance, or manner of speaking; but with a peculiar abhorrence of such appearances in spiritual rejoicings, especially since joys have been greatest of all: These high transports when they have been past, have had abiding effects in the increase of the sweetness, rest and humility that they have left upon the soul; and a new engagedness of heart to live to God's honor, and watch and fight against sin. And these things not in one that is in the giddy age of youth, nor in a new convert, and unexperienced Christian, but in one that was converted above twenty-seven years ago; and neither converted, nor educated in that enthusiastical town of Northampton, (as some may be ready to call it) but in a town and family that none that I know of suspected of enthusiasm; and in a Christian that has been long, in an uncommon manner, growing in grace, and rising, by very sensible degrees, to higher love to God, and weanedness from the world, and mastery over sin and temptation, through great trials and conflicts, and long continued

struggling and fighting with sin, and earnest and constant prayer and labor in religion, and engagedness of mind in the use of all means, attended with a great exactness of life: Which growth has been attended, not only with a great increase of religious affections, but with a wonderful alteration of outward behavior, in many things, visible to those who are most intimately acquainted, so as lately to have become as it were a new person; and particularly in living so much more above the world, and in a greater degree of stedfastness and strength in the way of duty and self denial, maintaining the Christian conflict against temptations, and conquering from time to time under great trials; persisting in an unmoved, untouched calm and rest, under the changes and accidents of time. The person had formerly in lower degrees of grace, been subject to unsteadiness, and many ups and downs, in the frame of mind; the mind being under great disadvantages, through a vapory habit of body, and often subject to melancholy, and at times almost overborn with it, it having been so even from early youth: But strength of grace, and divine light has of a long time, wholly conquered those disadvantages, and carried the mind in a constant manner, quite above all such effects of vapors. Since that resignation spoken of before, made near three years ago, every thing of that nature seems to be overcome and crushed by the power of faith and trust in God, and resignation to him; the person has remained in a constant uninterrupted rest, and humble joy in God, and assurance of his favor, without one hours melancholy or darkness, from that day to this; vapors have had great effects on the body, such as they used to have before, but the soul has been always out of their reach. And this stedfastness and constancy has remained through great outward changes and trials; such as times of the most extreme pain, and apparent hazard of immediate death. What has been felt in late great transports is known to be nothing new in kind, but to be of the same nature with what was felt formerly, when a little child of about five or six years of age; but only in a vastly higher degree. These transporting views and rapturous affections are not attended with any enthusiastic disposition, to

follow impulses, or any supposed prophetical revelations; nor have they been observed to be attended with any appearance of spiritual pride, but very much of a contrary disposition, an increase of a spirit of humility and meekness, and a disposition in honor to prefer others: And it is worthy to be remarked, that at a time remarkably distinguished from all others, wherein discoveries and holy affections were evidently at the greatest height that ever happened, the greatness and clearness of divine light being overwhelming, and the strength and sweetness of divine love altogether overpowering; which began early in the morning of the holy sabbath, and lasted for days together, melting all down in the deepest humility and poverty of spirit, reverence and resignation, and the sweetest meekness, and universal benevolence; I say, it is worthy to be observed, that there were these two things in a remarkable manner felt at that time, viz. a peculiar sensible aversion to a judging of others that were professing Christians of good standing in the visible church, that they were not converted, or with respect to their degrees of grace; or at all intermeddling with that matter, so much as to determine against and condemn others in the thought of the heart; it appearing hateful, as not agreeing with that lamblike humility, meekness, gentleness and charity, which the soul then, above other times, saw the beauty of, and felt a disposition to. The disposition that was then felt was, on the contrary to prefer others to self, and to hope that they saw more of God and loved him better; though before, under smaller discoveries, and feebler exercises of divine affection, there had been felt a disposition to censure and condemn others. And another thing that was felt at that time, was a very great sense of the importance of moral social duties, and how great a part of religion lay in them: There was such a new sense and conviction of this, beyond what had been before, that it seemed to be as it were a clear discovery then made to the soul: But in general, there has been a very great increase of a sense of these two things, as divine views and divine love have increased.

The things already mentioned have been attended also with the following things, viz. an extraordinary sense of the awful

majesty and greatness of God, so as oftentimes to take away the bodily strength; a sense of the holiness of God, as of a flame infinitely pure and bright, so as sometimes to overwhelm soul and body; a sense of the piercing allseeing eye of God, so as sometimes to take away the bodily strength; and an extraordinary view of the infinite terribleness of the wrath of God, which has very frequently been strongly impressed on the mind, together with a sense of the ineffable misery of sinners that are exposed to this wrath, that has been overbearing: Sometimes the exceeding pollution of the person's own heart, as a sink of all manner of abomination, and a nest of vipers, and the dreadfulness of an eternal hell of God's wrath, opened to view, both together; with a clear view of a desert of that misery, without the least degree of divine pity, and that by the pollution of the best duties; yea, only by the pollution and irreverence, and want of humility that attended once speaking of the holy name of God, when done in the best manner that ever it was done; the strength of the body very often taken away with a deep mourning for sin, as committed against so holy and good a God, sometimes with an affecting sense of actual sin, sometimes especially indwelling sin, sometimes the consideration of the sin of the heart as appearing in a particular thing, as for instance, in that there was no greater forwardness and readiness to selfdenial for God and Christ, that had so denied himself for us; yea, sometimes the consideration of sin that was in only speaking one word concerning the infinitely great and holy God, has been so affecting as to overcome the strength of nature: A very great sense of the certain truth of the great things revealed in the gospel; an overwhelming sense of the glory of the work of redemption, and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ; the glorious harmony of the divine attributes appearing therein, as that wherein mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other; a sight of the fulness and glorious sufficiency of Christ, that has been so affecting as to overcome the body: A constant immoveable trust in God through Christ, with a great sense of his strength and faithfulness, the sureness of his covenant, and the immu-

tability of his promises, so that the everlasting mountains and perpetual hills have appeared as mere shadows to these things: Sometimes the sufficiency and faithfulness of God as the covenant God of his people, appearing in these words, I AM THAT I AM, in so affecting a manner as to overcome the body: A sense of the glorious, unsearchable, unerring wisdom of God in his works, both of creation and providence, so as to swallow up the soul, and overcome the strength of the body: A sweet rejoicing of soul at the thoughts of God's being infinitely and unchangeably happy, and an exulting gladness of heart that God is selfsufficient, and infinitely above all dependence, and reigns over all, and does his will with absolute and uncontrolable power and sovereignty; a sense of the glory of the Holy Spirit, as the great comforter, so as to overwhelm both soul and body; only mentioning the word the Comforter, has immediately taken away all strength; that word, as the person expressed it, seemed great enough to fill heaven and earth: A most vehement and passionate desire of the honor and glory of God's name; a sensible, clear and constant preference of it, not only to the person's own temporal interest, but spiritual comfort in this world; and a willingness to suffer the hidings of God's face, and to live and die in darkness and horror if God's honor should require it, and to have no other reward for it but that God's name should be glorified, although so much of the sweetness of the light of God's countenance had been experienced: A great lamenting of ingratitude, and the lowness of the degree of love to God, so as to deprive of bodily strength; and very often vehement longings and faintings after more love to Christ, and greater conformity to him; especially longing after these two things, viz. to be more perfect in humility, and adoration; the flesh and heart, seems often to cry out for a lying low before God, and adoring him with greater love and humility: The thoughts of the perfect humility with which the saints in heaven worship God, and fall down before his throne, have often overcome the body, and set it into a great agitation. A great delight in singing praises to God and Jesus Christ, and longing that this present life may be, as it were, one continued song of praise to God;

longing, as the person expressed it, to set and sing this life away; and an overcoming pleasure in the thoughts of spending an eternity in that exercise; a living by faith to a great degree; a constant and extraordinary distrust of our own strength and wisdom; a great dependence on God for his help, in order to the performance of any thing to God's acceptance, and being restrained from the most horrid sins, and running upon God, even on his neck, and on the thick bosses of his bucklers: Such a sense of the black ingratitude of true saints coldness and deadness in religion, and their setting their hearts on the things of this world, as to overcome the bodily frame: A great longing that all the children of God might be lively in religion, fervent in their love, and active in the service of God; and when there have been appearances of it in others, rejoicing so in beholding the pleasing sight, that the joy of soul has been too great for the body: Taking pleasure in the thoughts of watching and striving against sin, and fighting through the way to heaven, and filling up this life with hard labor, and bearing the cross for Christ, as an opportunity to give God honor; not desiring to rest from labors till arrived in heaven, but abhorring the thoughts of it, and seeming astonished that God's own children should be backward to strive and deny themselves for God: Earnest longings that all God's people might be clothed with humility and meekness, like the Lamb of God, and feel nothing in their hearts but love and compassion to all mankind; and great grief when any thing to the contrary seems to appear in any of the children of God, as any bitterness or fierceness of zeal, or censoriousness, or reflecting uncharitably on others, or disputing with any appearance of heat of spirit; a deep concern for the good of others' souls; a melting compassion to those that looked on themselves as in a state of nature, and to saints under darkness, so as to cause the body to faint: An universal benevolence to mankind, with a longing as it were to embrace the whole world in the arms of pity and love; ideas of suffering from enemies, the utmost conceivable rage and cruelty, with a disposition felt to fervent love and pity in such a case, so far as it could be realized in thought; fainting with pity to the world that lies in ignorance and wick-

edness; sometimes a disposition felt to a life given up to mourning alone in a wilderness over a lost and miserable world; compassion towards them being often to that degree, that would allow of no support or rest, but in going to God, and pouring out the soul in prayer for them; earnest desires that the work of God, that is now in the land, may be carried on, and that with greater purity, and freedom from all bitter zeal, censoriousness, spiritual pride, hot disputes, &c.....a vehement and constant desire for the setting up of Christ's kingdom through the earth, as a kingdom of holiness, purity, love, peace and happiness to mankind: The soul often entertained with unspeakable delight, and bodily strength overborn, at the thoughts of heaven, as a world of love, where love shall be the saints eternal food, and they shall dwell in the light of love, and swim in an ocean of love, and where the very air and breath will be nothing but love; love to the people of God, or God's true saints, as such that have the image of Christ, and as those that will in a very little time shine in his perfect image that has been attended with that endearment and oneness of heart, and that sweetness and ravishment of soul, that has been altogether inexpressible; the strength very often taken away with longings that others might love God more, and serve God better, and have more of his comfortable presence, than the person that was the subject of these longings, desiring to follow the whole world to heaven, or that every one should go before, and be higher in grace and happiness, not by this person's diminution, but by others' increase: A delight in conversing of things of religion, and in seeing Christians together, talking of the most spiritual and heavenly things in religion, in a lively and feeling manner, and very frequently overcome with the pleasure of such conversation: A great sense often expressed, of the importance of the duty of charity to the poor, and how much the generality of Christians come short in the practice of it: A great sense of the need God's ministers have of much of the spirit of God, at this day especially; and most earnest longings and wrestlings with God for them, so as to take away the bodily strength: The greatest, fullest, longest continued, and most constant

assurance of the favor of God, and of a title to future glory, that ever I saw any appearance of in any person, enjoying, especially of late, (to use the person's own expression) *The riches, of full assurance:* Formerly longing to die with something of impatience, but lately, since that resignation forementioned about three years ago, an uninterrupted entire resignation to God with respect to life or death, sickness or health, ease or pain, which has remained unchanged and unshaken, when actually under extreme and violent pains, and in times of threatenings of immediate death; but though there be this patience and submission, yet the thoughts of death and the day of judgment are always exceeding sweet to the soul: This resignation is also attended with a constant resignation of the lives of dearest earthly friends, and sometimes when some of their lives have been imminently threatened; often expressing the sweetness of the liberty of having wholly left the world, and renounced all for God, and having nothing but God, in whom is an infinite fulness. These things have been attended with a constant sweet peace and calm and serenity of soul, without any cloud to interrupt it; a continual rejoicing in all the works of God's hands, the works of nature, and God's daily works of providence, all appearing with a sweet smile upon them; a wonderful access to God by prayer, as it were seeing him, and sensibly immediately conversing with him, as much oftentimes, (to use the person's own expressions) as if Christ were here on earth, sitting on a visible throne, to be approached to and conversed with; frequent, plain, sensible and immediate answers of prayer; all tears wiped away; all former troubles and sorrows of life forgotten, and all sorrow and sighing fled away, excepting grief for past sins, and for remaining corruption, and that Christ is loved no more, and that God is no more honored in the world, and a compassionate grief towards fellow creatures; a daily sensible doing and suffering every thing for God, for a long time past, eating for God, and working for God, and sleeping for God, and bearing pain and trouble for God, and doing all as the service of love, and so doing it with a continual uninterrupted cheerfulness, peace

and joy. Oh how good, said the person once, is it to work for God in the day time, and at night to lie down under his smiles! High experiences and religious affections in this person have not been attended with any disposition at all to neglect the necessary business of a secular calling, to spend the time in reading and prayer, and other exercises of devotion; but worldly business has been attended with great alacrity, as part of the service of God; The person declaring that it being done thus, it is found to be as good as prayer. These things have been accompanied with an exceeding concern and zeal for moral duties, and that all professors may with them adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour; and an uncommon care to perform relative and social duties, and a noted eminence in them; a great inoffensiveness of life and conversation in the sight of others; a great meekness, gentleness, and benevolence of spirit and behavior; and a great alteration in those things that formerly used to be the person's failings; seeming to be much overcome and swallowed up by the late great increase of grace, to the observation of those that are most conversant and most intimately acquainted: In times of the brightest light and highest flights of love and joy, finding no disposition to any opinion of being now perfectly free from sin (agreeable to the notion of the Wesleys and their followers, and some other high pretenders to spirituality in these days) but exceedingly the contrary: At such times especially, seeing how loathsome and polluted the soul is, soul and body and every act and word appearing like rottenness and corruption in that pure and holy light of God's glory; not slighting instruction or means of grace any more for having had great discoveries; on the contrary, never more sensible of the need of instruction than now. And one thing more may be added, viz. that these things have been attended with a particular dislike of placing religion much in dress, and spending much zeal about those things that in themselves are matters of indifference, or an affecting to shew humility and devotion by a mean habit, or a demure and melancholy countenance, or any thing singular and superstitious.

Now if such things are enthusiasm, and the fruits of a distempered brain, let my brain be evermore possessed of that happy distemper! If this be distraction, I pray God that the world of mankind may be all seized with this benign, meek, beneficent, beatifical, glorious distraction! If agitations of body were found in the French prophets, and ten thousand prophets more, it is little to their purpose who bring it as an objection against such a work as this, unless their purpose be to disprove the whole of the Christian religion. The great affections and high transports that others have lately been under, are in general of the same kind with those in the instance that has been given, though not to so high a degree, and many of them, not so pure and unmixed, and so well regulated. I have had opportunity to observe many instances here and elsewhere; and though there are some instances of great affections in which there has been a great mixture of nature with grace, and in some, a sad degenerating of religious affections; yet there is that uniformity observable, that it is easy to be seen that in general it is the same spirit from whence the work in all parts of the land has originated. And what notions have they of religion, that reject what has been described as not true religion? What shall we find to answer those expressions in scripture, *The peace of God that passes all understanding: Rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory, in believing in and loving an unseen Saviour: All joy and peace in believing: God's shining into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and being changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord: Having the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost given to us: Having the Spirit of God, and of glory, rest upon us: A Being called out of darkness into marvellous light; and having the day star arise in our hearts:* I say, if those things that have been mentioned, does not answer these expressions, what else can we find out that does answer them? Those that do not think such things as these to be the fruits of the true spirit, would do well to consider what kind of spirit they are waiting and pray-

ing for, and what sort of fruits they expect he should produce when he comes. I suppose it will generally be allowed that there is such a thing as a glorious outpouring of the Spirit of God to be expected, to introduce very joyful and glorious times upon religious accounts; times wherein holy love and joy will be raised to a great height in true Christians: But if those things that have been mentioned be rejected, what is left that we can find wherewith to patch up a notion, or form an idea, of the high blessed, joyful religion of these times? What is that any have a notion of, that is very sweet, excellent and joyful, of a religious nature, that is entirely of a different nature from these things?

Those that are waiting for the fruits in order to determine whether this be the work of God or no, would do well to consider two things: 1. What they are waiting for: Whether it be not this; to have this wonderful religious influence that is on the minds of people over and past, and then to see how they will behave themselves? That is, to have grace subside, and the actings of it in a great measure to cease, and to have persons grow cold and dead, and then to see whether after that they will behave themselves with that exactness and brightness of conversation, that is to be expected of lively Christians, or those that are in the vigorous exercises of grace..... There are many that will not be satisfied with any exactness or laboriousness in religion now, while persons have their minds much moved, and their affections are high; for they lay it to their flash of affection, and heat of zeal, as they call it; they are waiting to see whether they will carry themselves as well when these affections are over: That is, they are waiting to have persons sicken and lose their strength, that they may see whether they will then behave themselves like healthy strong men. I would desire that they would also consider whether they be not waiting for more than is reasonably to be expected, supposing this to be really a great work of God, and much more than has been found in former great outpourings of the Spirit of God, that have been universally acknowledged in the Christian church? Do not they expect fewer instances of apostacy, and evidences of hypocrisy

in professors, and those that for the present seem to be under the influences of the spirit, than were after that great outpouring of the spirit in the apostles days, or that which was in the time of the reformation? And do not they stand prepared to make a mighty argument of it against this work, if there should be *half* so many? And 2. They would do well to consider how *long* they will wait to see the good fruit of this work, before they will determine in favor of it. Is not their waiting unlimited? The visible fruit that is to be expected of a pouring out of the Spirit of God on a country, is a visible reformation in that country: What reformation has lately been brought to pass in Newengland, by this work, has been before observed: And has it not continued long enough already, to give reasonable satisfaction? If God cannot work on the hearts of a people after such a manner, as to shew his hand so plainly, as reasonably to expect it should be acknowledged in a year and an half, or two years time; yet surely it is unreasonable, that our expectations and demands should be unlimited, and our waiting without any bounds.

As there is the clearest evidence, from those things that have been observed, that this is the work of God, so it is evident that it is a very great and wonderful, and exceeding glorious work of God. This is certain that it is a great and wonderful event, a strange revolution, an unexpected, surprising overturning of things, suddenly brought to pass; such as never has been seen in Newengland, and scarce ever has been heard of in any land. Who that saw the state of things in Newengland a few years ago, the state that it was settled in, and the way that we had been so long going on in, would have thought that in so little a time there would be such a change? This is undoubtedly either a very great work of God, or a great work of the devil, as to the main substance of it. For though undoubtedly, God and the devil may work together at the same time, and in the same land; and when God is at work, especially if he be very remarkably at work, Satan will to his utmost endeavor intrude, and by intermingling his work, darken and hinder God's work; yet God and the devil do not work together in producing the same event, and in ef-

fecting the same change in the hearts and lives of men: But it is apparent that there are some things wherein the main substance of this work consists, a certain effect that is produced, and alteration that is made in the apprehensions, affections, dispositions and behavior of men, in which there is a likeness and agreement every where: Now this I say, is either a wonderful work of God, or a mighty work of the devil; and so is either a most happy event, greatly to be admired and rejoiced in, or a most awful calamity. Therefore if what has been said before, be sufficient to determine it to be as to the main, the work of God, then it must be acknowledged to be a very wonderful and glorious work of God.

Such a work is in its nature and kind, the most glorious of any work of God whatsoever; and is always so spoken of in scripture. It is the work of redemption, (the great end of all other works of God, and of which the work of creation was but a shadow) in the event, success and end of it: It is the work of new creation, that is infinitely more glorious than the old. I am bold to say, that the work of God in the conversion of one soul, considered together with the source, foundation and purchase of it, and also the benefit, end and eternal issue of it, is a more glorious work of God than the creation of the whole material universe: It is the most glorious of God's works, as it above all others manifests the glory of God: It is spoken of in scripture as that which shews *the exceeding greatness of God's power*, and *the glory and riches of divine grace*, and wherein Christ has the most glorious triumph over his enemies, and wherein God is mightily exalted: And it is a work above all others glorious, as it concerns the happiness of mankind; more happiness, and a greater benefit to man, is the fruit of each single drop of such a shower, than all the temporal good of the most happy revolution in a land or nation amounts to, or all that a people could gain by the conquest of the world.

And as this work is very glorious in its nature, so it is in its degree and circumstances. It will appear very glorious if we consider the unworthiness of the people that are the subjects of it; what obligations God has laid us under by the

special privileges we have enjoyed for our souls' good, and the great things God did for us at our first settlement in the land; and how he has followed us with his goodness to this day, and how we have abused his goodness; how long we have been revolting more and more, (as all confess) and how very corrupt we were become at last; in how great a degree we had cast off God, and forsaken the fountain of living waters: How obstinate we have been under all manner of means that God has used with us to reclaim us; how often we have mocked God with hypocritical pretences of humiliation, as in our annual days of public fasting, and other things, while instead of reforming, we only grew worse and worse; how dead a time it was every where before this work began: If we consider these things, we shall be most stupidly ungrateful, if we do not acknowledge God's visiting of us as he has done, as an instance of the glorious triumph of free and sovereign grace.

The work is very glorious if we consider the extent of it; being in this respect vastly beyond any former outpouring of the Spirit that ever was known in Newengland. There has formerly sometimes been a remarkable awakening and success of the means of grace, in some particular congregation; and this used to be much taken notice of, and acknowledged to be glorious, though the towns and congregations round about continued dead: But now God has brought to pass a new thing, he has wrought a great work of this nature, that has extended from one end of the land to the other, besides what has been wrought in other British colonies in America.

The work is very glorious in the great numbers that have to appearance, been turned from sin to God, and so delivered from a wretched captivity to sin and satan, saved from everlasting burnings, and made heirs of eternal glory. How high an honor, and great reward of their labors, have some eminent persons of note in the church of God, signified that they should esteem it, if they should be made the instruments of the conversion and eternal salvation of but *one* soul? And no greater event, than that is thought worthy of great notice in heaven among the hosts of glorious angels, who rejoice and sing on such an occasion: And when there are many thousands of

of souls thus converted and saved, shall it be esteemed worth but little notice, and be mentioned with coldness and indifference here on earth, by those among whom such a work is wrought?

The work has been very glorious and wonderful in many circumstances and events of it, that have been extraordinary, wherein God has, in an uncommon manner, made his hand visible, and his power conspicuous; as in the extraordinary degrees of awakening, the suddenness of conversions in innumerable instances, in which, though the work was quick, yet the thing wrought is manifestly durable. How common a thing has it been for great part of a congregation to be at once moved, by a mighty invisible power; and for six, eight, or ten souls to be converted to God, (to all appearance) in an exercise, in whom the visible change still continues? How great an alteration has been made in some towns; yea, some populous towns; the change still abiding? And how many very vicious persons have been wrought upon, so as to become visibly new creatures? God has also made his hand very visible, and his work glorious, in the multitudes of little children that have been wrought upon: I suppose there have been some hundreds of instances of this nature of late, any one of which formerly would have been looked upon so remarkable, as to be worthy to be recorded, and published through the land. The work is very glorious in its influences and effects on many that have been very ignorant and barbarous, as I before observed of the Indians and Negroes.

The work is also exceeding glorious in the high attainments of Christians, in the extraordinary degrees of light, love, and spiritual joy, that God has bestowed upon great multitudes. In this respect also, the land in all parts has abounded with such instances, any one of which if they had happened formerly, would have been thought worthy to be taken notice of by God's people, throughout the British dominions. The New Jerusalem in this respect has begun to come down from heaven, and perhaps never were more of the prelibations of heaven's glory given upon earth.

There being a great many errors and sinful irregularities mixed with this work of God, arising from our weakness, darkness and corruption, does not hinder this work of God's power and grace from being very glorious. Our follies and sins that we mix, do in some respects manifest the glory of it: The glory of divine power and grace is set off with the greater lustre, by what appears at the same time of the weakness of the earthen vessel. It is God's pleasure that there should be something remarkably to manifest the weakness and unworthiness of the subject, at the same time that he displays the excellency of his power and riches of his grace..... And I doubt not but some of those things that make some of us here on earth to be out of humor, and to look on this work with a sour, displeased countenance, do heighten the songs of the angels, when they praise God and the Lamb for what they see of the glory of God's allsufficiency, and the efficacy of Christ's redemption. And how unreasonable is it that we should be backward to acknowledge the glory of what God has done, because withal, the devil, and we, in hearkening to him, have done a great deal of mischief.

PART II.

Shewing the Obligations that all are under to acknowledge, rejoice in, and promote this WORK, *and the great Danger of the contrary.*

THERE are many things in the word of God, that shew that when God remarkably appears in any great work for his church, and against his enemies, it is a most dangerous thing, and highly provoking to God, to be slow and backward to acknowledge and honor God in the work, and to lie still and not to put to an helping hand. Christ's people are in scripture represented as his army; he is the Lord of Hosts or armies; He is the captain of the host of the Lord, as he called himself

when he appeared to Joshua, with a sword drawn in his hand, Joshua v. 13, 14, 15. He is the captain of his people's salvation; and therefore it may well be highly resented if they do not resort to him when he orders his banner to be displayed; or if they refuse to follow him when he blows the trumpet, and gloriously appears going forth against his enemies. God expects that every living soul should have his attention roused on such an occasion, and should most cheerfully yield to the call, and heedfully and diligently obey it; Isa. xviii. 3. "All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth the trumpet, hear ye." Especially should all Israel be gathered after their captain, as we read they were after Ehud, when he blew the trumpet in mount Ephraim, when he had slain Eglon king of Moab, Judg. iii. 27, 28. How severe is the martial law in such a case, when any of an army refuses to obey the sound of the trumpet, and follow his general to the battle? God at such a time appears in peculiar manifestations of his glory, and therefore not to be affected and animated, and to lie still, and refuse to follow God, will be resented as an high contempt of him. If a subject should stand by, and be a spectator of the solemnity of his prince's coronation, and should appear silent and sullen, when all the multitude were testifying their loyalty and joy, with loud acclamations; how greatly would he expose himself to be treated as a rebel, and quickly to perish by the authority of the prince that he refuses to honor?

At a time when God manifests himself in such a great work for his church, there is no such thing as being neuters; there is a necessity of being either for or against the king that then gloriously appears: As when a king is crowned, and there are public manifestations of joy on that occasion, there is no such thing as standing by as an indifferent spectator; all must appear as loyal subjects, and express their joy on that occasion, or be accounted enemies: So it always is when God, in any great dispensation of his providence, does remarkably set his king on his holy hill of Zion, and Christ in an extraordinary manner comes down from heaven to the earth, and

appears in his visible church in a great work of salvation for his people: So it was when Christ came down from heaven in his incarnation, and appeared on earth in his human presence; there was no such thing as being neuters, neither on his side nor against him: Those that sat still and said nothing, and did not declare for him, and come and join with him, after he, by his word and works, had given sufficient evidence who he was, were justly looked upon as his enemies; as Christ says, Matth. xii. 30. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad. So it is in a time when Christ is remarkably spiritually present, as well as when he is bodily present; and when he comes to carry on the work of redemption in the application of it, as well as in the revelation and purchase. If a king should come into one of his provinces, that had been oppressed by its foes, where some of his subjects had fallen off to the enemy, and joined with them against their lawful sovereign and his loyal subjects; I say, if the lawful sovereign himself should come into the province, and should ride forth there against his enemies, and should call upon all that were on his side to come and gather themselves to him; there would be no such thing, in such a case, as standing neuter: They that laid still and staid at a distance would undoubtedly be looked upon and treated as rebels. So in the day of battle, when two armies join, there is no such thing for any present as being of neither party, all must be on one side or the other; and they that are not found with the conqueror in such a case, must expect to have his weapons turned against them, and to fall with the rest of his enemies.

When God manifests himself with such glorious power in a work of this nature, he appears especially determined to put honor upon his son, and to fulfil his oath that he has sworn to him, that he would make every knee to bow, and every tongue to confess to him. God hath had it much on his heart, from all eternity, to glorify his dear and only begotten Son; and there are some special seasons that he appoints to that end, wherein he comes forth with omnipotent power to fulfil his promise and oath to him: And these times are

times of remarkable pouring out of his Spirit, to advance his kingdom; such a day is a day of his power, wherein his people shall be made willing, and he shall rule in the midst of his enemies; these especially are the times wherein God declares his firm decree that his Son shall reign on his holy hill of Zion; and therefore those that at such a time do not kiss the Son, as he then manifests himself, and appears in the glory of his majesty and grace, expose themselves to *perish from the way*, and to be *dashed in pieces with a rod of iron*.

As such a time is a time wherein God eminently *sets his king on his holy hill of Zion*, so it is a time wherein he remarkably fulfils that in Isa. xxviii. 16. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." Which the two Apostles Peter and Paul, (1 Pet. ii. 6, 7, 8. and Rom. ix. 33) join with that prophecy, Isa. viii. 14, 15. "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem: And many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared and taken." As signifying that both are fulfilled together. Yea, both are joined together by the prophet Isaiah himself; as you may see in the context of that forementioned, Isa. xxviii. 16. In ver. 13, preceding, it is said, "But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little, that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared and taken." And accordingly it always is so, that when Christ is in a peculiar and eminent manner manifested and magnified, by a glorious work of God in his church, as a foundation and a sanctuary for some, he is remarkably a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, a gin and a snare to others. They that continue long to stumble, and be offended and ensnared in their minds, at such a great and glorious work of Christ, in God's account, stumble at Christ, and are offended in him; for the work is that by which he makes Christ manifest, and shows his glory, and by which he makes *the stone that the builders refused, to be*

come the head of the corner. This shows how dangerous it is to continue always stumbling at such a work, forever doubting of it, and forbearing fully to acknowledge it, and give God the glory of it: Such persons are in danger *to go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared and taken,* and to have Christ *a stone of stumbling* to them, that shall be an occasion of their ruin; while he is to others *a sanctuary, and a sure foundation.*

The prophet Isaiah, Isa. xxix. 14, speaks of God's proceeding to do a marvellous work and a wonder, which should stumble and confound the wisdom of the wise and prudent; which the apostle in Acts xiii. 41, applies to the glorious work of salvation wrought in those days by the redemption of Christ, and that glorious outpouring of the Spirit to apply it that followed; the prophet in the context of that place in Isa. xxix. speaking of the same thing, and of the prophets and rulers and seers, those wise and prudent, whose eyes God had closed, says to them, verse 9, "Stay yourselves and wonder." In the original it is, *Be ye slow and wonder.* I leave it to others to consider whether it is not natural to interpret it thus, "Wonder at this marvellous work; let it be a strange thing, a great mystery that you know not what to make of, and that you are very slow and backward to acknowledge, long delaying to come to a determination concerning it." And what persons are in danger of that wonder, and are thus slow to acknowledge God in such a work, we learn by that of the apostle in that forementioned Acts xiii. 41. "Behold ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

The church of Christ is called upon greatly to rejoice, when at any time Christ remarkably appears, coming to his church, to carry on the work of salvation, to enlarge his own kingdom, and to deliver poor souls out of the pit, wherein there is no water, in Zech. ix. 9, 10, 11. "Rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion, shout O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy king cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation.....His dominion shall be from sea to sea....As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit

wherein is no water." Christ was pleased to give a notable typical or symbolical representation of such a great event as is spoken of in that prophecy, in his solemn entry into the literal Jerusalem, which was a type of the church or daughter of Zion, there spoken of; probably intending it as a figure and prelude of that great actual fulfilment of this prophecy, that was to be after his ascension, by the pouring out of the Spirit in the days of the apostles, and that more full accomplishment that should be in the latter ages of the Christian church. We have an account, that when Christ made this his solemn entry into Jerusalem, and the whole multitude of the disciples were rejoicing and praising God with loud voices, for all the mighty works that they had seen, the pharisees from among the multitude said to Christ, *Master, rebuke thy disciples;* but we are told, Luke xix. 39, 40, Christ "answered and said unto them, I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out:" Signifying, that if Christ's professing disciples should be unaffected on such an occasion, and should not appear openly to acknowledge and rejoice in the glory of God therein appearing, it would manifest such fearful hardness of heart, so exceeding that of the stones, that the very stones would condemn them. Should not this make those consider, who have held their peace so long since Christ has come to our Zion having salvation, and so wonderfully manifested his glory in this mighty work of his spirit, and so many of his disciples have been rejoicing and praising God with loud voices?

It must be acknowledged that so great and wonderful a work of God's Spirit, is a work wherein God's hand is remarkably *lifted up*, and wherein he displays his majesty, and shows great favor and mercy to sinners, in the glorious opportunity he gives them; and by which he makes our land to become much more a land of uprightness: Therefore that place, Isa. xxvi. 10, 11, shows the great danger of not seeing God's hand, and acknowledging his glory and majesty in such a work: "Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Lord

when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see; but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.

It is not unlikely that this work of God's Spirit, that is so extraordinary and wonderful, is the dawning, or at least, a prelude of that glorious work of God, so often foretold in scripture, which in the progress and issue of it shall renew the world of mankind. If we consider how long since, the things foretold, as what should precede this great event have been accomplished; and how long this event has been expected by the church of God, and thought to be nigh by the most eminent men of God in the church; and withal consider what the state of things now is, and has for a considerable time been, in the church of God, and world of mankind, we cannot reasonably think otherwise, than that the beginning of this great work of God must be near. And there are many things that make it probable that this work will begin in America. It is signified that it shall begin in some very remote part of the world, that the rest of the world have no communication with but by navigation, in Isa. lx. 9. "Surely the Isles will wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring my sons from far." It is exceeding manifest that this chapter is a prophecy of the prosperity of the church, in its most glorious state on earth, in the latter days; and I cannot think that any thing else can be here intended but America, by the isles that are far off, from whence the first born sons of that glorious day shall be brought. Indeed by *the isles*, in prophecies of gospel times, is very often meant *Europe*: It is so in prophecies of that great spreading of the gospel that should be soon after Christ's time, because it was far separated from that part of the world where the church of God had, until then been, by the sea. But this prophecy cannot have respect to the conversion of Europe, in the time of that great work of God, in the primitive ages of the Christian church; for it was not fulfilled then: The isles and ships of Tarshish, thus understood, did not wait for God first; that glorious work did not begin in Europe, but in Jerusalem, and had for a considerable time, been very wonderfully carried on

in Asia, before it reached Europe. And as it is not that work of God that is chiefly intended in this chapter, but that more glorious work that should be in the latter ages of the Christian church, therefore some other part of the world is here intended by the Isles, that should be as Europe then was, far separated from that part of the world where the church had before been, by the sea, and with which it can have no communication but by the ships of Tarshish. And what is chiefly intended is not the British Isles, nor any Isles near the other continent; for they are spoken of as at a great distance from that part of the world where the church had till then been. This prophecy therefore seems plainly to point out America, as the first fruits of that glorious day.

God has made as it were two worlds here below, the old and the new, (according to the names they are now called by) two great habitable continents, far separated one from the other; the latter is but newly discovered, it was formerly wholly unknown, from age to age, and is as it were now but newly created: It has been, until of late, wholly the possession of Satan, the church of God having never been in it, as it has been in the other continent, from the beginning of the world. This new world is probably now discovered, that the new and most glorious state of God's church on earth might commence there; that God might in it begin a new world in a spiritual respect, when he creates the *new Heavens* and *new earth*.

God has already put that honor upon the other continent, that Christ was born there literally, and there made the *purchase of redemption*: So, as Providence observes a kind of equal distribution of things, it is not unlikely that the great spiritual birth of Christ, and the most glorious *application of redemption* is to begin in this: As the elder sister brought forth Judah, of whom, came Christ, and so she was the mother of Christ; but the younger sister, after long barrenness, brought forth Joseph and Benjamin, the beloved children. Joseph, that had the most glorious apparel, the coat of many colors, who was separated from his brethren, and was exalted to such glory out of a dark dungeon, and fed and saved the

world, when ready to perish with famine, and was as a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches ran over the wall, and was blessed with all manner of blessings and precious things, of heaven and earth, through the good will of him that dwelt in the bush; and was, as by the horns of an unicorn, to push the people together, to the ends of the earth, i. e. conquer the world. See Gen. xlix. 22, &c. and Deut. xxxiii. 13, &c. And Benjamin, whose mess was five times so great as that of any of his brethren, and to whom Joseph, that type of Christ, gave wealth and raiment far beyond all the rest. Gen. xlv. 22.

The other continent hath slain Christ, and has from age to age shed the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, and has often been as it were deluged with the churches blood: God has therefore probably reserved the honor of building the glorious temple to the daughter, that has not shed so much blood, when those times of the peace, and prosperity, and glory of the church shall commence, that were typified by the reign of Solomon.

The Gentiles first received the true religion from the Jews: God's church of ancient times had been among them, and Christ was of them: But that there might be a kind of equality in the dispensations of providence, God has so ordered it, that when the Jews come to be admitted to the benefits of the evangelical dispensation, and to receive their highest privileges of all, they should receive the gospel from the Gentiles: Though Christ was of them, yet they have been guilty of crucifying him; it is therefore the will of God, that that people should not have the honor of communicating the blessings of the kingdom of God in its most glorious state, to the Gentiles, but on the contrary, they shall receive the gospel in the beginning of that glorious day, from the Gentiles. In some analogy to this, I apprehend God's dealings will be with the two continents. America has received the true religion of the old continent; the church of ancient times has been there, and Christ is from thence: But that there may be an equality, and inasmuch as that continent has crucified Christ,

they shall not have the honor of communicating religion in its most glorious state to us, but we to them.

The old continent has been the source and original of mankind, in several respects. The first parents of mankind dwelt there; and there dwelt Noah and his sons; and there the second Adam was born, and was crucified and rose again: And it is probable that, in some measure to balance these things, the most glorious renovation of the world shall originate from the new continent, and the church of God in that respect be from hence. And so it is probable that that will come to pass in spirituals, that has in temporals, with respect to America; that whereas till of late, the world was supplied with its silver and gold and earthly treasures from the old continent, now it is supplied chiefly from the new, so the course of things in spiritual respects will be in like manner turned.

And it is worthy to be noted that America was discovered about the time of the reformation, or but little before: Which reformation was the first thing that God did towards the glorious renovation of the world, after it had sunk into the depths of darkness and ruin, under the great antichristian apostasy. So that as soon as this new world is (as it were) created, and stands forth in view, God presently goes about doing some great thing to make way for the introduction of the churches latter day glory, that is to have its first seat in, and is to take its rise from that new world.

It is agreeable to God's manner of working, when he accomplishes any glorious work in the world, to introduce a new and more excellent state of his church, to begin his work where his church had not been till then, and where was no foundation already laid, that the power of God might be the more conspicuous; that the work might appear to be entirely God's, and be more manifestly a creation out of nothing; agreeably to Hos. i. 10. "And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, ye are the sons of the living God." When God is about to turn the earth into a Paradise, he does not begin his work where there is some good growth

already, but in a wilderness, where nothing grows, and nothing is to be seen but dry sand and barren rocks; that the light may shine out of darkness, and the world be replenished from emptiness, and the earth watered by springs from a droughty desert; agreeably to many prophecies of scripture, as Isa. xxxii. 15. "Until the spirit be poured from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field." And chap. xli. 18. "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water: I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle and oil tree: I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together;" and chap. xliii. 20. "I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen." And many other parallel scriptures might be mentioned.

I observed before, that when God is about to do some great work for his church, his manner is to begin at the lower end; so when he is about to renew the whole habitable earth, it is probable that he will begin in this utmost, meanest, youngest and weakest part of it, where the church of God has been planted last of all; and so the first shall be last, and the last first; and that will be fulfilled in an eminent manner in Isa. xxiv. 16. "From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous."

There are several things that seem to me to argue, that when the Sun of Righteousness, the sun of the new heavens and new earth, comes to rise, and *comes forth as the bridegroom* of his church, *rejoicing as a strong man to run his race, having his going forth from the end of heaven, and his circuit to the end of it, that nothing may be hid from the light and heat of it*,* that the sun shall rise in the west,

* It is evident that the Holy Spirit, in those expressions in Psal. xix. 4, 5, and 6 verses, has respect to something else besides the natural sun; and that an eye is had to the Sun of Righteousness, that by his light converts the soul, makes wise the simple, enlightens the eyes, and rejoices the heart; and by his preached gospel enlightens and warms the world of mankind. By the Psalmist's own application in verse 7, and the apostle's application of verse 4, in Rom. x. 18.

contrary to the course of this world, or the course of things in the old heavens and earth. The course of God's providence shall in that day be so wonderfully altered in many respects, that God will as it were change the course of nature, in answer to the prayers of his church; as God changed the course of nature, and caused the sun to go from the West to the East, when Hezekiah was healed, and God promised to do such great things for his church, to deliver it out of the hand of the king of Assyria, by that mighty slaughter by the angel; which is often used by the prophet Isaiah, as a type of the glorious deliverance of the church from her enemies in the latter days: The resurrection of Hezekiah, the king and captain of the church, (as he is called 2 Kings xx. 5) as it were from the dead, is given as an earnest of the churches resurrection and salvation, Isa. xxxviii. 6, and is a type of the resurrection of Christ. At the same time there is a resurrection of the sun, or coming back and rising again from the west, whether it had gone down; which is also a type of the sun of righteousness. The sun was brought back ten degrees; which probably brought it to the meridian. The sun of righteousness has long been going down from east to west; and probably when the time comes of the church's deliverance from her enemies, so often typified by the Assyrians, the light will rise in the west, until it shines through the world, like the sun in its meridian brightness.

The same seems also to be represented by the course of the waters of the sanctuary, Ezek. xlvii, which was from west to east; which waters undoubtedly represent the Holy Spirit, in the progress of his saving influences, in the latter ages of the world: For it is manifest that the whole of those last chapters of Ezekiel, are concerning the glorious state of the church that shall then be.

And if we may suppose that this glorious work of God shall begin in any part of America, I think if we consider the circumstances of the settlement of Newengland, it must needs appear the most likely of all American colonies, to be the place whence this work shall principally take its rise.

And if these things are so, it gives us more abundant reason to hope that what is now seen in America, and especially in Newengland, may prove the dawn of that glorious day: And the very uncommon and wonderful circumstances and events of this work, seem to me strongly to argue that God intends it as the beginning or forerunner of some thing vastly great.

I have thus long insisted on this point, because if these things are so, it greatly manifests how much it behoves us to encourage and promote this work, and how dangerous it will be to forbear so to do.

It is very dangerous for God's professing people to lie still, and not to come to the help of the Lord, whenever he remarkably pours out his Spirit, to carry on the work of redemption in the application of it; but above all when he comes forth in that last and greatest outpouring of his Spirit, to introduce that happy day of God's power and salvation, so often spoken of. That is especially the appointed season of the application of the redemption of Christ: It is the proper time of the kingdom of heaven upon earth, the appointed time of Christ's reign: The reign of Satan as God of this world lasts till then: This is the proper time of actual redemption, or new creation, as is evident by Isa. lxv. 17, 18, and lxvi. 12, and Rev. xxi. 1. All the outpourings of the Spirit of God that are before this, are as it were by way of anticipation.

There was indeed a glorious season of the application of redemption, in the first ages of the Christian church, that began at Jerusalem, on the day of pentecost; but that was not the proper time of ingathering; it was only as it were the feast of the first fruits; the ingathering is at the end of the year, or in the last ages of the Christian church, as is represented, Rev. xiv. 14, 15, 16, and will probably as much exceed what was in the first ages of the Christian church, though that filled the Roman empire, as that exceeded all that had been before, under the old Testament, confined only to the land of Judea.

The great danger of not appearing openly to acknowlege, rejoice in, and promote that great work of God, in bringing in

that glorious harvest, is represented in Zech. xiv. 16, 17, 18, 19. "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left, of all the nations, which come against Jerusalem, shall even go up, from year to year, to worship the king, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up, of all the families of the earth, unto Jerusalem, to worship the king, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain, there shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen, that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." It is evident by all the context, that the glorious day of the church of God in the latter ages of the world, is the time spoken of: The feast of tabernacles here seems to signify that glorious spiritual feast, which God shall then make for his church, the same that is spoken of Isa. xxv. 5, and the great spiritual rejoicings of God's people at that time. There were three great feasts in Israel, at which all the males were appointed to go up to Jerusalem; the feast of the passover; and the feast of the first fruits, or the feast of pentecost; and the feast of ingathering, at the end of the year, or the feast of tabernacles. In the first of these, viz. *the feast of the passover*, was represented the purchase of redemption by Jesus Christ, the paschal Lamb, that was slain at the time of that feast. The other two that followed it, were to represent the two great seasons of the *application* of the purchased redemption: In the former of them, viz. *the feast of the first fruits*, which was called the feast of pentecost, was represented that time of the outpouring of the Spirit, that was in the first ages of the Christian church, for the bringing in the first fruits of Christ's redemption, which began at Jerusalem, on the day of pentecost: The other, which was *the feast of ingathering*, at the end of the year, which the children of Israel were appointed to keep on occasion of their gathering in their corn and their wine, and all the fruit of their land, and was called the *feast of tabernacles*, represented the other more joyful and

glorious season of the application of Christ's redemption, which is to be in the latter days ; the great day of ingathering of the elect, the proper and appointed time of gathering in God's fruits, when the angel of the covenant shall thrust in his sickle, and gather the harvest of the earth ; and the clusters of the vine of the earth shall also be gathered. This was upon many accounts the greatest feast of the three : There were much greater tokens of rejoicing in this feast, than any other : The people then dwelt in booths of green boughs, and were commanded to take boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook, and to rejoice before the Lord their God : Which represents the flourishing, beautiful, pleasant state the church shall be in, rejoicing in God's grace and love, triumphing over all her enemies, at the time typified by this feast. The tabernacle of God was first set up among the children of Israel, at the time of the feast of tabernacles ; but in that glorious time of the Christian church, God will above all other times set up his tabernacle amongst men. Rev. xxi. 3. " And I heard a great voice out of Heaven, saying, The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." The world is supposed to have been created about the time of year wherein the feast of tabernacles was appointed ; so in that glorious time, God will create a new heaven and a new earth. The temple of Solomon was dedicated at the time of the feast of tabernacles, when God descended in a pillar of cloud, and dwelt in the temple ; so at this happy time the temple of God shall be gloriously built up in the world, and God shall in a wonderful manner come down from heaven to dwell with his church. Christ is supposed to have been born at the feast of tabernacles ; so at the commencement of that glorious day, Christ shall be born ; then above all other times shall the *Woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, that is in travail, and pained to be delivered, bring forth her son to rule all nations*, Rev. xii. at the beginning. The feast of tabernacles was the last feast that Israel had in the whole year, before

the face of the earth was destroyed by the winter; presently after the rejoicings of that feast were past, a tempestuous season began. Acts xxvii. 9. "Sailing was now dangerous because the feast was now already past." So this great feast of the Christian church will be the last feast she shall have on earth: Soon after it is past this lower world will be destroyed. At the feast of tabernacles, Israel left their houses to dwell in booths or green tents, which signifies the great weanedness of God's people from the world, as pilgrims and strangers on the earth, and their great joy therein. Israel were prepared for the feast of tabernacles, by the feast of trumpets, and the day of atonement both on the same month; so way shall be made for the joy of the church of God, in its glorious state on earth, by the extraordinary preaching of the gospel, and deep repentance and humiliation for past sins, and the great and long continued deadness and carnality of the visible church. Christ at the great feast of tabernacles, stood in Jesusalem, *and cried, saying, If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink: He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters:* Signifying the extraordinary freedom and riches of divine grace towards sinners, at that day, and the extraordinary measures of the Holy Spirit that shall be then given; agreeable to Rev. xxi. 6, and xxii. 17.

It is threatened here in this 14th chapter of Zech. that those who at that time shall not come to keep this feast; i. e. that shall not acknowledge God's glorious works, and praise his name, and rejoice with his people, but should stand at a distance, as unbelieving and disaffected; *upon them shall be no rain*; and that this shall be the plague wherewith they shall all be smitten; that is, they shall have no share in that shower of divine blessing that shall then descend on the earth, that spiritual rain spoken of, Isa. lxiv. 3. But God would give them over to hardnesss of heart and blindness of mind.

The curse is yet in a more awful manner denounced against such as shall appear as opposers at that time, ver. 12. "And this shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord shall smite all the people, that have fought against Jerusalem, their flesh

shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth." Here also in all probability it is a spiritual judgment, or a plague and curse from God upon the soul, rather than upon the body, that is intended; that such persons, who at that time shall oppose God's people in his work, shall in an extraordinary manner be given over to a state of spiritual death and ruin, that they shall remarkably appear dead while alive, and shall be as walking rotten corpses, while they go about amongst men.

The great danger of not joining with God's people at that glorious day is also represented, Isa. lx. 12. "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.

Most of the great temporal deliverances that were wrought for Israel of old, as divines and expositors observe, were typical of the great spiritual works of God for the salvation of men's souls, and the deliverance and prosperity of his church, in the days of the gospel; and especially did they represent that greatest of all deliverances of God's church, and chief of God's works, of actual salvation, that shall be in the latter days; which as has been observed is above all others, the appointed time, and proper season of actual redemption of men's souls. But it may be observed that if any appeared to oppose God's work in those great temporal deliverances; or if there were any of his professing people, that on such occasions lay still, and stood at a distance, and did not arise and acknowledge God in his work, and appear to promote it; it was what in a remarkable manner incensed God's anger, and brought his curse upon such persons.

So when God wrought that great work of bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt, (which was a type of God's delivering his church out of the spiritual Egypt, at the time of the fall of Antichrist, as is evident by Rev. xi. 8, and xv. 3.) How highly did God resent it, when the Amalekites appeared as opposers in that affair? And how dreadfully did he curse them for it? Exod. xvii. 14, 15, 16. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it

in the ears of Joshua ; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah Nissi ; for he said, because the Lord will have war with Amalek, from generation to generation." And accordingly we find that God remembered it a long time after, 1 Sam. xv. 3. And how highly did God resent it in the Moabites and Ammonites, that they did not lend an helping hand, and encourage and promote the affair? Deut. xxiii. 3, 4. " An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord ; even to their tenth generation, shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord forever ; because they met you not with bread and with water, in the way when ye came forth out of Egypt." And how were the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh threatened if they did not go and help their brethren in their wars against the Canaanites, Deut, xxxii. 20, 21, 22, 23. " And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the Lord to war, and will go all of you armed over Jordan, before the Lord, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him, and the land be subdued before the Lord, then afterward ye shall return and be guiltless before the Lord, and before Israel, and this land shall be your possession before the Lord : But if ye will not do so, behold ye have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out."

That was a glorious work of God that he wrought for Israel, when he delivered them from the Canaanites, by the hand of Deborah and Barak : Almost every thing about it shewed a remarkable hand of God. It was a prophetess, one immediately inspired by God, that called the people to the battle, and conducted them in the whole affair : The people seem to have been miraculously animated and encouraged in the matter, when they willingly offered themselves, and gathered together to the battle ; they jeoparded their lives in the high places of the field, without being pressed or hired ; when one would have thought they should have but little courage for such an undertaking ; for what could a number of poor, weak, defenceless slaves do, without *a shield or spear to be seen*

among forty thousand of them, to go against a great prince, with his mighty host, and nine hundred chariots of iron. And the success did wonderfully shew the hand of God; which makes Deborah exultingly to say, Judg. v. 21. "O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength!" Christ with his heavenly host was engaged in that battle; and therefore it is said, ver. 20. "They fought from heaven, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." The work of God therefore in this victory and deliverance that Christ and his host wrought for Israel, was a type of that victory and deliverance which he will accomplish for his church in that great battle, that last conflict that the church shall have with her open enemies, that shall introduce the churches latter day glory; as appears by Rev. xvi. 16. (speaking of that great battle) "And he gathered them together into a place, called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon," i. e. the mountain of Megiddo; alluding, as is supposed by expositors, to the place where the battle was fought with the host of Sisera, Judg. v. 19. "The kings came and fought, the kings of Canaan, in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo." Which can signify nothing else, than that this battle, which Christ and his church shall have with their enemies, is the antitype of the battle that was fought there. But what a dreadful curse from Christ, did some of God's professing people Israel bring upon themselves, by lying still at that time, and not putting to an helping hand? Judg. v. 23. "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." The angel of the Lord was the captain of the host; he that had led Israel, and fought for them in that battle, who is very often called *the angel of the Lord*, in scripture; the same that appeared to Joshua with a sword drawn in his hand, and told him that *he was come as the captain of the host of the Lord*; and the same glorious captain that we have an account of, as leading forth his hosts to that battle, of which this was the type, Rev. xix. 11, &c. It seems the inhabitants of Meroz were unbelieving concerning this great work, nor would they hearken to Deborah's pretences, nor did it enter into them

that such a poor defenceless company, should ever prevail against those that were so mighty; they did not acknowledge the hand of God, and therefore stood at a distance, and did nothing to promote the work: But what a bitter curse from God, did they bring upon themselves by it!

It is very probable that one great reason why the inhabitants of Meroz were so unbelieving concerning this work, was that they argued *a priori*; they did not like the beginning of it, it being a woman that first led the way, and had the chief conduct in the affair; nor could they believe that such despicable instruments, as a company of unarmed slaves, were ever like to effect so great a thing; and pride and unbelief wrought together, in not being willing to follow Deborah to the battle.

It was another glorious work of God that he wrought for Israel, in the victory that was obtained by Gideon over the Midianites and Amalekites, and the children of the east, when they came up against Israel like grasshoppers, a multitude that could not be numbered. This also was a remarkable type of the victory of Christ and his church over his enemies, by the pouring out of the Spirit with the preached gospel, as is evident by the manner of it, which Gideon was immediately directed to of God; which was not by human sword or bow, but only by blowing of trumpets, and by lights in earthen vessels. We read that on this occasion, Gideon called the people together to help in this great affair; and that accordingly, great numbers resorted to him, and came to the help of the Lord, Judg. vii. 23, 24. But there were some also at that time, that were unbelieving, and would not acknowledge the hand of God in that work, though it was so great and wonderful, nor would they join to promote it; and they were the inhabitants of Succoth and Penuel: Gideon desired their help, when he was pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna; but they despised his pretences, and his confidence of the Lord's being on his side, to deliver those two great princes into the hands of such a despicable company, as he and his three hundred men, and would not own the work of God, nor afford Gideon any assistance: God proceeded in this work in a way that

was exceeding cross to their pride. And they also refused to own the work, because they argued *a priori*; they could not believe that God would do such great things by such a despicable instrument; one of such a poor mean family in Manasseh, and he the least in his father's house; and the company that was with him appeared very wretched, being but three hundred men, and they weak and faint: But we see how they suffered for their folly, in not acknowledging, and appearing to promote this work of God. *Gideon* when he returned from the victory, *took them, and taught them with the briers and thorns of the wilderness, and beat down the tower of Penuel*, (he brought down their pride, and their false confidence) *and slew the men of the city*, Judg. chap. 8. This, in all probability Gideon did, as moved and directed by the angel of the Lord, that is Christ, that first called him, and sent him forth in this battle, and instructed and directed him, in the whole affair.

The return of the ark of God to dwell in Zion, in the midst of the land of Israel, after it had been long absent, first in the land of the Philistines, and then in Kirjathjearim, in the utmost borders of the land, did livelily represent the return of God to a professing people, in the spiritual tokens of his presence, after long absence from them; as well as the ark's ascending up into a mountain, typified Christ's ascension into heaven. It is evident by the Psalms that were penned on that occasion, especially the 68th Psalm, that the exceeding rejoicings of Israel on that occasion, represented the joy of the church of Christ, on his returning to it, after it has been in a low and dark state to revive his work, bringing his people *back*, as it were *from Bashan, and from the depth of the sea*, scattering their spiritual enemies, and causing that *though they had lain among the pots, yet they should be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold*; and giving the blessed tokens of his presence in his house, that his people may *see the goings of God the king in his sanctuary*; and that the gifts which David, with such royal bounty, distributed amongst the people on that occasion (2 Sam. vi. 18, 19, and 1 Chron. xvi. 2, 3) represent spiritual bless-

ings, that Christ liberally sends down on his church, by the outpourings of his Spirit. See Psal. lxviii. 1, 2, 12, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. And we have an account how that all the people, from Shihor of Egypt, even unto the entering in of Hemath, gathered together, and appeared to join and assist in that great affair; and that all Israel *brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord, with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps*, 1 Chron. xiii. 2, 5, and xv. 28. And not only the men, but the women of Israel, the daughters of Zion appeared as publicly joining in the praises and rejoicings that were on that occasion, 2 Sam. vi. 19. But we read of one of David's wives, even Michal, Saul's daughter, whose heart was not engaged in the affair, and did not appear with others to rejoice and praise God on this occasion, but kept away, and stood at a distance, as disaffected, and disliking the managements; she despised and ridiculed the transports, and extraordinary manifestations of joy that then were; and the curse that she brought upon herself by it, was that of being barren to the day of her death. Let this be a warning to us: Let us take heed, in this day of the bringing up of the ark of God, that while we are in visibility and profession the spouse of the spiritual David, we do not shew ourselves to be indeed the children of false hearted and rebellious Saul, by our standing aloof, and not joining in the joy and praises of the day, and disliking and despising the joys and affections of God's people, because they are to so high a degree, and so bring the curse of perpetual barrenness upon our souls.

Let us take heed that we be not like the son of the bond woman, that was born after the flesh, that persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, and mocked at the feasting and rejoicings that were made for Isaac when he was weaned; lest we should be cast out of the family of Abraham, as he was. Gen. xxi. 8, 9. That affair contained spiritual mysteries, and was typical of things that come to pass in these days of the gospel; as is evident by the apostles' testimony, Gal. iv. 22, to the end. And particularly it seems to have been typical of two things. 1. The weaning of the church from its milk of

carnal ordinances, ceremonies, shadows, and beggarly elements, upon the coming of Christ, and the pouring out of the Spirit in the days of the apostles. The church of Christ, in the times of the Old Testament, was in its minority, and was a babe; and the apostle tells us that babes must be fed with milk, and not with strong meat; but when God weaned his church from these carnal ordinances, on the ceasing of the legal dispensation, a glorious gospel feast was provided for souls, and God fed his people with spiritual dainties, and filled them with the Spirit, and gave them joy in the Holy Ghost. Ishmael, in mocking at the time of Isaac's feast, by the apostle's testimony, represented the carnal Jews, the children of the literal Jerusalem, who, when they beheld the rejoicings of Christians, in their spiritual and evangelical privileges, were filled with envy, deriding, contradicting and blaspheming..... Acts ii. 13, and chap. xiii. 45, and xviii. 6. And therefore were cast out of the family of Abraham, and out of the land of Canaan, to wander through the earth. 2. This weaning of Isaac seems also to represent the conversion of sinners, which is several times represented in scripture by the weaning of a child; as in Psal. cxxxi, and Isa. xxviii. 9. Because in conversion, the soul is weaned from the enjoyments of the world, which are as it were the breast of our mother earth; and is also weaned from the covenant of our first parents, which we as naturally hang upon, as a child on its mother's breasts: And the great feast that Abraham made on that occasion, represents the spiritual feast, the heavenly privileges, and holy joys and comforts, which God gives souls at their conversion. Now is a time when God is in a remarkable manner bestowing the blessings of such a feast. Let every one take heed that he does not now shew himself to be the son of the bond woman, and born after the flesh, by standing and deriding, with mocking Ishmael; lest they be cast out as he was, and it be said concerning them, these sons of the bond woman, shall not be heirs with the sons of the free woman. Do not let us stumble at the things that have been, because they are so great and extraordinary; for if we have run with the footmen, and they have wearied us, how shall we contend

with horses? There is doubtless a time coming when God will accomplish things vastly greater and more extraordinary than these.

And that we may be warned not to continue doubting and unbelieving, concerning this work, because of the extraordinary degree of it, and the suddenness and swiftness of the accomplishment of the great things that pertain to it, let us consider the example of the unbelieving lord in Samaria; who could not believe so extraordinary a work of God to be accomplished so suddenly as was declared to him: The prophet Elisha foretold that the great famine in Samaria should very suddenly, even in one day, be turned into an extraordinary plenty; but the work was too great, and too sudden for him to believe; says he, *If the Lord should make windows in heaven, might this thing be?* And the curse that he brought upon himself by it, was that he saw it with his eyes, and did not eat thereof, but miserably perished, and was trodden down as the mire of the streets, when others were feasting and rejoicing. 2 Kings, chap. 7.

When God redeemed his people from their Babylonish captivity, and they rebuilt Jerusalem, it was, as is universally owned, a remarkable type of the spiritual redemption of God's church; and particularly, was an eminent type of the great deliverance of the Christian church from spiritual Babylon, and their rebuilding the spiritual Jerusalem, in the latter days; and therefore they are often spoken of under one by the prophets: And this probably was the main reason that it was so ordered in providence, and particularly noted in scripture, that the children of Israel, on that occasion, kept the greatest *feast of tabernacles*, that ever had been kept in Israel, since the days of Joshua, when the people were first settled in Canaan; (Neh. viii. 16, 17) because at that time happened that restoration of Israel, that had the greatest resemblance of that great restoration of the church of God, of which the *feast of tabernacles* was the type, of any that had been since Joshua first brought the people out of the wilderness, and settled them in the good land. But we read of some that opposed the Jews in that affair, and weakened their hands, and

ridiculed God's people, and the instruments that were improved in that work, and despised their hope, and made as though their confidence was little more than a shadow, and would utterly fail them: *What do these feeble Jews?* (say they) *Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they make an end in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.* Let not us be in any measure like them, lest it be said to us, as Nehemiah said to them, Neh. ii. 20. "We his servants will arise and build; but you have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem." And least we bring Nehemiah's imprecation upon us, chap. iv. 5. "Cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee; for they have provoked thee to anger, before the builders.

As persons will greatly expose themselves to the curse of God, by opposing, or standing at a distance, and keeping silence at such a time as this; so for persons to arise, and readily to acknowledge God, and honor him in such a work, and cheerfully and vigorously to exert themselves to promote it, will be to put themselves much in the way of the divine blessing. What a mark of honor does God put upon those in Israel, that willingly offered themselves, and came to the help of the Lord against the mighty, when the angel of the Lord led forth his armies, and they fought from heaven against Sisera? Judg. v. 2, 9, 14, 15, 17, 18. And what a great blessing is pronounced on Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, for her appearing on the Lord's side, and for what she did to promote this work? ver. 24. Which was no less than the curse pronounced in the preceding verse, against Meroz, for lying still: *Blessed above women, shall Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women, in the tent.* And what a blessing is pronounced on those which shall have any hand in the destruction of Babylon, which was the head city of the kingdom of Satan, and of the enemies of the church of God? Psal. cxxxvii. 9, "Happy shall he be, that taketh, and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." What a particular and honorable notice is taken, in

the records of God's word, of those that arose, and appeared as David's helpers, to introduce him into the kingdom of Israel, in the xiith chap. of 1 Chron. The host of those that thus came to the help of the Lord, in that work of his, and glorious revolution in Israel, by which the kingdom of that great type of the Messiah was set up in Israel, is compared to the host of God, ver. 22. "At that time, day by day, there came to David, to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God." And doubtless it was intended to be a type of that host of God, that shall appear with the spiritual David, as his helpers, when he shall come to set up his kingdom in the world; the same host that we read of, Rev. xix. 14. The Spirit of God then pronounced a special blessing on David's helpers, as those that were coworkers with God, ver. 18. "Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, thine are we David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse; peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers, for thy God helpeth thee. So we may conclude that God will much more give his blessing to such as come to the help of the Lord, when he sets his own dear Son as king on his holy hill of Zion; and they shall be received by Christ, and he will put peculiar honor upon them, as David did on those his helpers; as we have an account, in the following words, ver. 18. "Then David received them, and made them captains of the band." It is particularly noted of those that came to David to Hebron, ready armed to the war, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the Lord, that "They were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." ver. 23 and 32. Herein they differed from the Pharisees and other Jews, that did not come to the help of the Lord, at the time that the great son of David appeared to set up his kingdom in the world, whom Christ condemns, that they had not *understanding of those times*, Luke xii. 56. "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth; but how is it, that ye do not discern these times? So it always will be, when Christ remarkably appears on earth, on a design of setting up his kingdom here, there will be many that will not understand

the times, nor what Israel ought to do, and so will not come to turn about the kingdom to David.

The favorable notice that God will take of such as appear to promote the work of God, at such a time as this, may also be argued from such a very particular notice being taken in the sacred records, of those that helped in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, upon the return from the Babylonish captivity. Nehem. chap. iii.

At such a time as this, when God is setting his king on his holy hill of Zion, or establishing his dominion, or shewing forth his regal glory from thence, he expects that his visible people, without exception, should openly appear to acknowledge him in such a work, and bow before him, and join with him. But especially does he expect this of civil rulers: God's eye is especially upon them, to see how they behave themselves on such an occasion. If a new king comes to the throne, when he comes from abroad, and enters into his kingdom, and makes his solemn entry into the royal city, it is expected that all sorts should acknowledge him; but above all others is it expected that the great men, and public officers of the nation should then make their appearance, and attend on their sovereign, with suitable congratulations, and manifestations of respect and loyalty: If such as these stand at a distance, at such a time, it will be much more taken notice of, and will awaken the prince's jealousy and displeasure much more, than such a behavior in the common people. And thus it is, when the eternal Son of God, and heir of the world, by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice, whom his Father has appointed to be king of kings, comes as it were from far, and in the spiritual tokens of his presence, enters into the royal city Zion; God has his eye at such a time, especially upon those princes, nobles, and judges of the earth, spoken of Prov. viii. 16, to see how they behave themselves, whether they bow to him, that he has made the head of all principality and power. This is evident by the 2d Psalm ver. 6, 7, 10, 11, 12. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. Be

wise now therefore, O ye kings, be instructed ye judges of the earth; serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling; kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." There seems to be in the words, an allusion to a new king's coming to the throne, and making his solemn entry into the royal city; (as Zion was the royal city in Israel) when it is expected that all, especially men in public office and authority, should manifest their loyalty, by some open and visible token of respect, *by the way*, as he passes along; and those that refuse or neglect it are in danger of being immediately struck down, and perishing *from the way*, by which the king goes in solemn procession.

The day wherein God does in an eminent manner send forth the rod of Christ's strength out of Zion, that he may rule in the midst of his enemies, the day of his power, wherein his people shall be made willing, is also eminently a day of his wrath, especially to such rulers as oppose him, or will not bow to him; a day wherein he "shall strike through kings, and fill the places with the dead bodies, and wound the heads over many countries." Psal. 110. And thus, it is, that when the son of God *girds his sword upon his thigh, with his glory and his majesty, and in his majesty rides prosperously, because of truth, meekness and righteousness, his right hand teaches him terrible things.* It was the princes of Succoth especially, that suffered punishment, when the inhabitants of that city refused to come to the help of the Lord, when Gideon was pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna; we read that Gideon took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness, and briars, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. It is especially taken notice of that the rulers and chief men of Israel, were called upon to assist in the affair of bringing up the ark of God; they were chiefly consulted, and were principal in the management of the affair. 1 Chron. xiii. 1. "And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader." And chap. xv. 25. "So David and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord, out of the house

of Obed Edom, with joy." So 2 Sam. vi. 1. And so it was when the ark was brought into the temple, 1 Kings, viii. 13, and 2 Chron. v. 2, 4.

And as rulers, by neglecting their duty at such a time, will especially expose themselves to God's great displeasure, so by fully acknowledging God in such a work, and by cheerfully and vigorously exerting themselves to promote it, they will especially be in the way of receiving peculiar honors and rewards at God's hands. It is noted of the Princes of Israel, that they especially appeared to honor God with their princely offering, on occasion of the setting up the tabernacle of God, in the congregation of Israel: (which I have observed already was done at the time of the feast of tabernacles, and was a type of the tabernacle of God's being with men, and his dwelling with men in the latter days) And with what abundant particularity, is it noted of each prince, how much he offered to God on that occasion, for their everlasting honor, in the 7th chapter of Numbers? And so with how much favor and honor does the Spirit of God take notice of those princes in Israel, that came to the help of the Lord, in the war against Sisera? Judg. v. 9. "My heart is towards the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people." And ver. 14. "Out of Machir came down governors. Ver. 15: "And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah." And in the account that we have of the rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, in the third chapter of Nehemiah. It is particularly noted, what an hand one and another of the rulers had in this affair; we have an account that such a part of the wall was repaired by the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, and such a part by the ruler of the other half part of Jerusalem, and such a part by the ruler of part of Bethhaccerem, and such a part by the ruler of part of Mizpah, and such a part by the ruler of the half part of Bethzur; and such a part by the ruler of Mizpah, ver. ix. 12, 14, 15, 16, 19. And there it is particularly noted of the rulers of one of the cities, that they put not their necks to the work of the Lord, though the common people did; and they are stigmatized for it, in the sacred records, to their everlasting reproach, ver. 5. "And

next unto them, the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of the Lord." So the Spirit of God with special honor, takes notice of princes and rulers of several tribes, that assisted in bringing up the ark, Psal. lxviii. 27.

And I humbly desire that it may be considered, whether we have not reason to fear that God is provoked with this land, that no more notice has been taken of this glorious work of the Lord, that has been lately carried on, by the civil authority; that there has no more been done by them, as a public acknowledgment of God in this work, and no more improvement of their authority to promote it, either by appointing a day of public thanksgiving to God, for so unspeakable a mercy, or a day of fasting and prayer, to humble ourselves before God, for our past deadness and unprofitableness under the means of grace, and to seek the continuance and increase of the tokens of his presence; or so much as to enter upon any public consultation, what should be done to advance the present revival of religion, and great reformation that is begun in the land. Is there not danger that such a behavior, at such a time, will be interpreted by God, as a denial of Christ? If but a new governor comes into a province, how much is there done, especially by those that are in authority, to put honor upon him, to arise and appear publicly, and go forth to meet him, to address and congratulate him, and with great expense to attend upon him and aid him? If the authority of the province, on such an occasion, should all sit still and say and do nothing, and take no notice of the arrival of their new governor, would there not be danger of its being interpreted by him, and his prince that sent him, as a denial of his authority, or a refusing to receive him, and honor him as their governor? And shall the head of the angels, and lord of the universe, come down from heaven, in so wonderful a manner, into the land, and shall all stand at a distance, and be silent and inactive on such an occasion? I would humbly recommend it to our rulers, to consider whether God does not now say to them, *Be wise now ye rulers, be instructed ye judges of Newengland; kiss the son, lest he be angry and ye perish from the way.*

It is prophesied Zech. xii. 8. That in the glorious day of the christian church, the house of David, or the rulers in God's Israel, *shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord, before his people.* But how can such rulers expect to have any share in this glorious promise, that do not so much as openly acknowledge God in the work of that Spirit, by which the glory of that day is to be accomplished? The days are coming so often spoken of when the saints shall reign on earth, and all dominion and authority shall be given into their hands: But if our rulers would partake of this honor, they ought at such a day as this, to bring their glory and honor into the spiritual Jerusalem, agreeably to Rev. xxi. 24.

But above all others, is God's eye upon ministers of the gospel, as expecting of them, that they should arise, and acknowledge and honor him in such a work, as this, and do their utmost to encourage and promote it: For to promote such a work, is the very business which they are called and devoted to; it is the office to which they are appointed as coworkers with Christ, and as his ambassadors and instruments, to awaken and convert sinners, and establish, build up, and comfort saints; it is the business they have been solemnly charged with, before God, angels and men, and that they have given up themselves to, by the most sacred vows. These especially, are the officers of Christ's kingdom, that above all others upon earth, do represent his person, into whose hands Christ has committed the sacred oracles, and holy ordinances, and all his appointed means of Grace, to be administered by them; they are the stewards of his household, into whose hands he has committed its provision; the immortal souls of men are committed to them, as a flock of sheep are committed to the care of a shepherd, or as a master commits a treasure to the care of a servant, of which he must give an account: It is expected of them, above all others, that they should have understanding of the times, and know what Israel ought to do; for it is their business to acquaint themselves with things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and to teach and enlighten others in things of this nature. We that are employed in the sacred work of the gospel ministry, are the watchmen over

the city, to whom God has committed the keys of the gates of Zion; and if when the rightful king of Zion comes, to deliver his people from the enemy that oppresses them, we refuse to open the gates to him, how greatly shall we expose ourselves to his wrath? We are appointed to be the captains of the host in this war: And if a general will highly resent it in a private soldier, if he refuses to follow him when his banner is displayed, and his trumpet blown; how much more will he resent it in the officers of his army? The work of the gospel ministry consisting in the administration of God's word and ordinances, is the principal means that God has appointed for carrying on his work on the souls of men; and it is his revealed will, that whenever that glorious revival of religion, and reformation of the world, so often spoken of in his word, is accomplished, it should be principally by the labors of his ministers; and therefore how heinous will it be in the sight of God, if when a work of that nature is begun, we appear unbelieving, slow, backward, and disaffected? There was no sort of persons among the Jews that was in any measure treated with such manifestations of God's great displeasure, and severe indignation, for not acknowledging Christ, and the work of his Spirit, in the days of Christ and his apostles, as the ministers of religion: See how Christ deals with them for it, in the 23d chapter of Matthew; with what gentleness did Christ treat publicans and harlots, in comparison of them?

When the tabernacle was erected in the camp of Israel, and God came down from heaven to dwell in it, the priests were above all others concerned, and busily employed in the solemn transactions of that occasion, Levit. chap. viii. and ix. And so it was at the time of the dedication of the temple of Solomon, 1 Kings, chap. viii. and 2 Chron. chap. v. vi. and vii. which was at the time of the feast of tabernacles, at the same time that the tabernacle was erected in the wilderness: And the Levites were primarily, and most immediately concerned in bringing up the ark into mount Zion; the business properly belonged to them, and the ark was carried upon their shoulders, 1 Chron. xv. 2. "Then David said, none ought to

carry the ark of God but the Levites; for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him forever." And v. 11, 12. "And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Aminadab, and said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, both ye, and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel, unto the place that I have prepared for it." So we have an account that the priests led the way in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, after the Babylonish Captivity, Neh. iii. at the beginning.

If ministers preach never so good doctrine, and are never so painful and laborious in their work, yet, if at such a day as this, they shew to their people, that they are not well affected to this work, but are very doubtful and suspicious of it, they will be very likely to do their people a great deal more hurt than good: For the very fame of such a great and extraordinary work of God, if their people were suffered to believe it to be his work, and the example of other towns, together with what preaching they might hear occasionally, would be likely to have a much greater influence upon the minds of their people to awaken them and animate them in religion, than all their labors with them: And besides their minister's opinion will not only beget in them a suspicion of the work they hear of abroad, whereby the mighty hand of God that appears in it, loses its influence upon their minds, but it will also tend to create a suspicion of every thing of the like nature, that shall appear among themselves, as being something of the same distemper that has become so epidemical in the land; and that is, in effect, to create a suspicion of all vital religion, and to put the people upon talking against it, and discouraging it, wherever it appears, and knocking it in the head, as fast as it rises. And we that are ministers, by looking on this work, from year to year, with a displeased countenance, shall effectually keep the sheep from their pasture, instead of doing the part of shepherds to them, by feeding them; and our people had a great deal better be without any settled minister at all, at such a day as this.

We that are in this sacred office have need to take heed what we do, and how we behave ourselves at this time: A less thing in a minister will hinder the work of God, than in others. If we are very silent, or say but little about the work, in our public prayers and preaching, or seem carefully to avoid speaking of it in our conversation, it will and justly may be interpreted by our people, that we who are their guides, to whom they are to have their eye for spiritual instruction, are suspicious of it; and this will tend to raise the same suspicions in them; and so the forementioned consequences will follow. And if we really hinder, and stand in the way of the work of God, whose business above all others it is to promote it, how can we expect to partake of the glorious benefits of it? And by keeping others from the benefit of it, we shall keep them out of heaven; therefore those awful words of Christ to the Jewish teachers, should be considered by us, Matth. xxiii. 13. "Wo unto you, for you shut up the kingdom of heaven; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in." If we keep the sheep from their pasture, how shall we answer it to the great shepherd, that has bought the flock with his precious blood, and has committed the care of them to us? I would humbly desire of every minister that has thus long remained disaffected to this work, and has had contemptible thoughts of it, to consider whether he has not hitherto been like Michal, without any child, or at least in a great measure barren and unsuccessful in his work: I pray God it may not be a perpetual barrenness as hers was.

The times of Christ's remarkably appearing, in behalf of his church, and to revive religion, and advance his kingdom in the world, are often spoken in the prophecies of scripture, as times wherein he will remarkably execute judgments on such ministers or shepherds, as do not feed the flock, but hinder their being fed, and so deliver his flock from them, as Jer. xxiii. throughout, and Ezek. xxxiv. throughout, and Zech. x. 3, and Isa. lvi. 7, 8, 9, &c. I observed before that Christ's solemn, magnificent entry into Jerusalem, seems to be designed, as a representation of his glorious coming into

his church, the spiritual Jerusalem; and therefore it is worthy to be noted, to our present purpose, that Christ at that time, cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; signifying that when he should come to set up his kingdom on earth, he would cast out those out of his house, who, instead of being faithful ministers, officiated there only for worldly gain: Not that I determine that all ministers that are suspicious of this work, do so; but I mention these things to shew that it is to be expected, that a time of a glorious outpouring of the Spirit of God to revive religion, will be a time of remarkable judgments on those ministers that do not serve the end of their ministry.

The example of the unbelieving lord in Samaria, should especially be for the warning of ministers and rulers: At the time when God turned an extreme famine into a great plenty, by a wonderful work of his, the king appointed this lord to have the charge of the gate of the city; where he saw the common people, in multitudes, entering with great joy and gladness, loaded with provision, to feed and feast their almost famished bodies; but he himself, though he saw it with his eyes, never had one taste of it, but being weak with famine, sunk down in the crowd, and was trodden to death, as a punishment of God, for his not giving credit to that great and wonderful work of God, when sufficiently manifested to him to require his belief. Ministers are those, that the King of the church has appointed to have the charge of the gate, at which his people enter into the kingdom of heaven, there to be entertained and satisfied with an eternal feast; ministers have the charge of the house of God, which is the gate of heaven.

Ministers should especially take heed of a spirit of envy towards other ministers, that God is pleased to make more use of to carry on this work, than they; and that they do not, from such a spirit, reproach some preachers, that have the true spirit, as though they were influenced by a false spirit, or were bereft of reason, and were mad, and were proud, false pretenders, and deserved to be put in prison or the

stocks, as disturbers of the peace; lest they expose themselves to the curse of Shemaiah, the Nehelamite, who envied the prophet Jeremiah, and in this manner reviled him, in his letter to Zephaniah the priest, Jer. xxix. 26, 27. "The Lord hath made thee priest, in the stead of Jehoiada the priest, that ye should be officers in the house of the Lord, for every man that is mad, and maketh himself a prophet, that thou shouldest put him in prison, and in the stocks. Now therefore, why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a prophet to you?" His curse is denounced in the 32d verse. "Therefore, thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed; he shall not have a man to dwell among his people, neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people, saith the Lord, because he hath taught rebellion against the Lord. All those that are others superiors or elders, should take heed, that at this day they be not like the elder brother, who could not bear it, that the prodigal should be made so much of, and should be so sumptuously entertained, and would not join in the joy of the feast; was like Michal, Saul's daughter, offended at the music and dancing that he heard; the transports of joy displeased him; it seemed to him to be an unseemly and unseasonable noise and ado, that was made; and therefore stood at a distance, sullen, and much offended, and full of invectives against the young prodigal.

It is our wisest and best way, fully, and without reluctance, to bow to the great God in this work, and to be entirely resigned to him, with respect to the manner in which he carries it on, and the instruments he is pleased to make use of, and not to shew ourselves out of humor, and sullenly to refuse to acknowledge the work, in the full glory of it, because we have not had so great a hand in promoting it, or have not shared so largely in the blessings of it, as some others; and not to refuse to give all that honor, that belongs to others, as instruments, because they are young, or are upon other accounts, much inferior to ourselves, and many others, and may appear to us very unworthy, that God should put so much honor upon them. When God comes to accomplish any great work

for his church, and for the advancement of the kingdom of his son, he always fulfills that scripture, Isa. ii. 17. "And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." If God has a design of carrying on this work, every one, whether he be great or small, must either bow to it, or be broken before it: It may be expected that God's hand will be upon every thing that is high, and stiff, and strong in opposition, as in Isa. ii. 12, 13, 14, 15. "For the day of the Lord of hosts, shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low; and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall."

Not only magistrates and ministers, but every living soul, is now obliged to acknowledge God in this work, and put to his hand to promote it, as they would not expose themselves to God's curse. All sorts of persons, throughout the whole congregation of Israel, great and small, rich and poor, men and women, helped to build the tabernacle in the wilderness; some in one way, others in another; each one according to his capacity: Every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his Spirit made willing; all sorts contributed, and all sorts were employed in that affair, in labors of their hands, both men and women: Some brought gold and silver; others blue, purple and scarlet, and fine linen; others offered an offering of brass; others, with whom was found Shittim wood, brought it an offering to the Lord: The rulers brought onyx stones, and spice, and oil; and some brought goats hair; and some rams skins, and others badgers skins.... See Exod. xxxv. 20, &c. And we are told verse 29. "The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing." And thus it ought to be in this day of building the tabernacle of God; with such a willing and cheerful heart, ought every man, woman, and child, to do something to promote this

work: Those that have not onyx stones, or are not able to bring gold or silver, yet may bring goats hair.

As all sorts of persons were employed in building the tabernacle in the wilderness, so the whole congregation of Israel were called together to set up the tabernacle in Shiloh, after they came into Canaan, Josh. xviii. 1. And so again, the whole congregation of Israel were gathered together, to bring up the ark of God, from Kirjathjearim; and again, they were all assembled to bring it up, out of the house of *Obed Edom into mount Zion*; so again, all Israel met together to assist in the great affair of the dedication of the temple, and bringing the ark into it: So we have an account, how that all sorts assisted in the rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, not only the proper inhabitants of Jerusalem, but those that dwelt in other parts of the land; not only the priests and rulers, but the Nethinims and merchants, husbandmen, and mechanics, and women. Neh. iii. 5, 12, 26, 31, 32. And we have an account of one and another, that he repaired over against his house, ver. 10, and 23, 28, and of one that repaired over against his chamber, ver. 30. So now, at this time of the rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, every one ought to promote the work of God within his own sphere, and by doing what belongs to him, in the place in which God has set him: Men in a private capacity, may repair over against their houses: And even those that have not the government of families, and have but part of an house belonging to them, should repair, each one over against his chamber: And every one should be engaged to do the utmost that lies in his power, laboring with the utmost watchfulness, care and diligence, with united hearts, and united strength, and the greatest readiness, to assist one another in this work: As God's people rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem; who were so diligent in the work, that they wrought from break of day, till the stars appeared, and did not so much as put off their clothes in the night; and wrought with that care and watchfulness, that with one hand they wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon; besides the guard they set to defend them; and were so well united in it, that they took

care, that one should stand ready, with a trumpet in his hand, that if any were assaulted in one part, those in the other parts at the sound of the trumpet, might resort to them, and help them, Neh. iv. at the latter end.

Great care should be taken that the press should be improved to no purpose contrary to the interest of this work. We read that when God fought against Sisera, for the deliverance of his oppressed church, *they that handle the pen of the writer* came to the help of the Lord in that affair, Judg. v. 14. Whatever sort of men in Israel they were that were intended, yet as the words were indited by a Spirit, that had a perfect view of all events to the end of the world, and had a special eye in this song, to that great event of the deliverance of God's church, in the latter days, of which this deliverance of Israel, was a type, it is not unlikely that they have respect to authors, those that should fight against the kingdom of Satan, with their pens. Those therefore that publish pamphlets, to the disadvantage of this work, and tending either directly or indirectly to bring it under suspicion, and to discourage or hinder it, would do well thoroughly to consider whether this be not indeed the work of God; and whether if it be, it is not likely that God will go forth as fire, to consume all that stands in his way, and so burn up those pamphlets; and whether there be not danger that the fire that is kindled in them, will scorch the authors.

When a people oppose Christ in the work of his Holy Spirit, it is because it touches them, in something that is dear to their carnal minds; and because they see the tendency of it is to cross their pride, and deprive them of the objects of their lusts. We should take heed that at this day we be not like the Gadarenes, who, when Christ came into their country, in the exercise of his glorious power and grace, triumphing over a legion of devils, and delivering a miserable creature, that had long been their captive, were all alarmed, because they lost their swine by it, and the whole multitude of the country came, and besought him to depart out of their coasts: They loved their filthy swine, better than Jesus Christ; and

had rather have a legion of devils in their country, with their herd of swine, than Jesus Christ without them.

This work may be opposed, not only by directly speaking against the whole of it: Persons may say that they believe there is a good work carried on in the country; and may sometimes bless God, in their public prayers, in general terms, for any awakenings or revivals of religion, there have lately been in any parts of the land; and may pray that God would carry on his own work, and pour out his spirit more and more; and yet, as I apprehend, be in the sight of God, great opposers of his work: Some will express themselves after this manner, that are so far from acknowledging and rejoicing in the infinite mercy, and glorious grace of God, in causing so happy a change in the land, that they look upon the religious state of the country, take it in the whole of it, much more sorrowful than it was ten years ago; and whose conversation, to those that are well acquainted with them, evidently shews, that they are more out of humor with the state of things, and enjoy themselves less, than they did before ever this work began..... If it be manifestly thus with us, and our talk and behavior with respect to this work, be such as has, (though but) an indirect tendency, to beget ill thoughts and suspicions in others concerning it, we are opposers of the work of God.

Instead of coming to the help of the Lord, we shall actually fight against him, if we are abundant in insisting on, and setting forth the blemishes of the work, so as to manifest that we rather choose, and are more forward to take notice of what is amiss, than what is good and glorious in the work. Not but that the errors that are committed, ought to be observed and lamented, and a proper testimony borne against them, and the most probable means should be used to have them amended; but an insisting much upon them, as though it were a pleasing theme, or speaking of them with more appearance of heat of spirit, or with ridicule, or an air of contempt, than grief for them, has no tendency to correct the errors; but has a tendency to darken the glory of God's power and grace, appearing in the substance of the work, and to beget jealousies and ill thoughts in the minds of others, con-

cerning the whole of it. Whatever errors many zealous persons have run into, yet if the work, in the substance of it, be the work of God, then it is a joyful day indeed; it is so in heaven, and ought to be so, among God's people on earth, especially in that part of the earth, where this glorious work is carried on. It is a day of great rejoicing with Christ himself, the good shepherd, when he finds his sheep that was lost, lays it on his shoulders rejoicing, and calls together his friends and neighbors, saying, rejoice with me: If we therefore are Christ's friends, now it should be a day of great rejoicing with us. If we viewed things in a just light, so great an event as the conversion of such a multitude of sinners, would draw and engage our attention, much more than all the imprudences and irregularities that have been; our hearts would be swallowed up with the glory of this event, and we should have no great disposition to attend to any thing else. The imprudences and errors of poor feeble worms, do not hinder or prevent great rejoicing, in the presence of the angels of God, over so many poor sinners that have repented; and it will be an argument of something very ill in us, if they prevent our rejoicing.

Who loves, in a day of great joy and gladness, to be much insisting on those things that are uncomfortable? Would it not be very improper, on a kings coronation day, to be much in taking notice of the blemishes of the royal family? Or would it be agreeable to the bridegroom on the day of his espousals, the day of the gladness of his heart, to be much insisting on the blemishes of his bride? We have an account, how that at the time of that joyful dispensation of providence, the restoration of the church of Israel, after the Babylonish captivity, and at the time of the feast of tabernacles, many wept at the faults that were found amongst the people, but were reproved for taking so much notice of the blemishes of that affair, as to overlook the cause of rejoicing. Neh. viii. 9, 10, 11, 12. "And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest, the scribe, and the Levites, that taught the people, said unto all the people, this day is holy unto the Lord your God, mourn not nor weep; for all the people wept, when

they heard the words of the law. Then he said unto them, go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them, for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord; neither be you sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, hold your peace, for the day is holy, neither be ye grieved. And all the people went their way, to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them."

God doubtless now expects, that all sorts of persons in Newengland, rulers, ministers and people, high and low, rich and poor, old and young, should take great notice of his hand, in this mighty work of his grace, and should appear to acknowledge his glory in it, and greatly to rejoice in it, every one doing his utmost, in the place that God has set them in, to promote it. And God, according to his wonderful patience, seems to be still waiting, to give us opportunity, thus to acknowledge and honor him. But if we finally refuse, there is not the least reason to expect any other, than that his awful curse will pursue us, and that the pourings out of his wrath will be proportionable to the despised outpourings of his Spirit and grace.

PART III.

Shewing, in many Instances, wherein the Subjects, or zealous Promoters of this WORK, have been injuriously blamed.

THIS work, that has lately been carried on in the land, is the work of God, and not the work of man. Its beginning has not been of man's power or device, and its being carried on, depends not on our strength or wisdom; but yet God expects of all, that they should use their utmost endeavors to promote it, and that the hearts of all should be greatly engag-

ed in this affair, and that we should improve our utmost strength in it, however vain human strength is without the power of God; and so he no less requires that we should improve our utmost care, wisdom and prudence, though human wisdom, of itself be as vain as human strength. Though God is wont to carry on such a work, in such a manner, as many ways, to shew the weakness and vanity of means and human endeavors, in themselves; yet at the same time, he carries it on in such a manner, as to encourage diligence and vigilance, in the use of proper means and endeavors, and to punish the neglect of them. Therefore in our endeavors to promote this great work, we ought to use the utmost caution, vigilance and skill, in the measures we take in order to it. A great affair should be managed with great prudence: This is the most important affair that ever Newengland was called to be concerned in. When a people are engaged in war with a powerful and crafty nation, it concerns them to manage an affair of such consequence with the utmost discretion. Of what vast importance then must it be, that we should be vigilant and prudent, in the management of this great war that Newengland now has, with so great a host of such subtle and cruel enemies, wherein we must either conquer or be conquered, and the consequence of the victory, on one side, will be our eternal destruction, in both soul and body in hell, and on the other side, our obtaining the kingdom of heaven, and reigning in it in eternal glory? We had need always to stand on our watch, and to be well versed in the art of war, and not to be ignorant of the devices of our enemies, and to take heed lest by any means we be beguiled through their subtilty.

Though the devil be strong, yet in such a war as this, he depends more on his craft than his strength: And the course he has chiefly taken, from time to time, to clog, hinder and overthrow revivals of religion in the church of God, has been by his subtle, deceitful management, to beguile and mislead those that have been engaged therein; and in such a course God has been pleased, in his holy and sovereign providence, to suffer him to succeed, oftentimes, in a great measure, to overthrow that, which in its beginning appeared most hopeful

and glorious. The work that is now begun in Newengland, is, as I have shown, eminently glorious, and if it should go on and prevail, would make Newengland a kind of heaven upon earth: Is it not therefore a thousand pities, that it should be overthrown, through wrong and improper management, that we are led into by our subtle adversary, in our endeavors to promote it?

In treating of the methods that ought to be taken to promote this work, I would,

1. Take notice, in some instances, wherein fault has been found with the conduct of those that have appeared to be the subjects of it, or have been zealous to promote it, (as I apprehend) beyond just cause.

2. I would shew what things ought to be corrected or avoided.

3. I would shew positively, what ought to be done to promote this glorious work of God.

I. I would take notice of some things, at which offence has been taken without, or beyond just cause.

One thing that has been complained of, is ministers addressing themselves, rather to the affections of their hearers, than to their understandings, and striving to raise their passions to the utmost height, rather by a very affectionate manner of speaking, and a great appearance of earnestness, in voice and gesture, than by clear reasoning and informing their judgment: By which means it is objected, that the affections are moved, without a proportionable enlightening of the understanding.

To which I would say I am far from thinking that it is not very profitable, for ministers in their preaching, to endeavor clearly and distinctly to explain the doctrines of religion, and unravel the difficulties that attend them, and to confirm them with strength of reason and argumentation, and also to observe some easy and clear method and order, in their discourses, for the help of the understanding and memory; and it is very probable that these things have been of late, too much neglected, by many ministers; yet, I believe that the objection

that is made, of affections raised without enlightening the understanding, is in a great measure built on a mistake, and confused notions that some have about the nature and cause of the affections, and the manner in which they depend on the understanding. All affections are raised either by light *in the understanding*, or by some error and delusion *in the understanding*; for all affections do certainly arise from some apprehension in the understanding; and that apprehension must either be agreeable to truth, or else be some mistake or delusion; if it be an apprehension or notion that is agreeable to truth, then it is *light in the understanding*. Therefore the thing to be inquired into is, whether the apprehensions or notions of divine and eternal things, that are raised in people's minds, by these affectionate preachers, whence their affections are excited, be apprehensions that are agreeable to truth, or whether they are mistakes. If the former, then the affections are raised the way they should be, viz. By informing the mind, or conveying light to the understanding. They go away with a wrong notion, that think that those preachers cannot affect their hearers, by enlightening their understandings, that do not do it by such a distinct, and learned handling of the doctrinal points of religion, as depends on human discipline, or the strength of natural reason, and tends to enlarge their hearers learning, and speculative knowledge in divinity. The manner of preaching without this, may be such as shall tend very much to set divine and eternal things, in a right view, and to give the hearers such ideas and apprehensions of them as are agreeable to truth, and such impressions on their hearts, as are answerable to the real nature of things: And not only the words that are spoken, but the manner of speaking, is one thing that has a great tendency to this. I think an exceeding affectionate way of preaching about the great things of religion, has in itself no tendency to beget false apprehensions of them; but on the contrary a much greater tendency to beget true apprehensions of them, than a moderate, dull, indifferent way of speaking of them. An appearance of affection and earnestness, in the manner of delivery, if it be very great indeed, yet if it be agreeable to the nature

of the subject, and be not beyond a proportion to its importance, and worthiness of affection, and there be no appearance of its being feigned or forced, has so much the greater tendency to beget true ideas or apprehensions in the minds of the hearers, of the subject spoken of, and so to enlighten the understanding: And that for this reason, that such a way or manner of speaking of these things, does in fact, more truly represent them, than a more cold and indifferent way of speaking of them. If the subject be in its own nature, worthy of very great affection, then a speaking of it with very great affection, is most agreeable to the nature of that subject, or is the truest representation of it, and therefore has most of a tendency to beget true ideas of it, in the minds of those, to whom the representation is made. And I do not think ministers are to be blamed, for raising the affections of their hearers too high, if that which they are affected with, be only that which is worthy of affection, and their affections are not raised beyond a proportion to their importance, or worthiness of affection. I should think myself in the way of my duty, to raise the affections of my hearers as high as possibly I can, provided that they are affected with nothing but truth, and with affections that are not disagreeable to the nature of what they are affected with. I know it has long been fashionable to despise a very earnest and pathetical way of preaching; And they, and they only have been valued as preachers, that have shown the greatest extent of learning, and strength of reason, and correctness of method and language: But I humbly conceive it has been for want of understanding, or duly considering human nature, that such preaching has been thought to have the greatest tendency to answer the ends of preaching; and the experience of the present and past ages abundantly confirms the same. Though, as I said before, clearness of distinction and illustration, and strength of reason, and a good method, in the doctrinal handling of the truths of religion, is many ways needful and profitable, and not to be neglected, yet an increase in speculative knowledge in divinity, is not what is so much needed by our people, as something else. Men may abound in this sort of light and have

no heat: How much has there been of this sort of knowledge, in the Christian world, in this age? Was there ever an age, wherein strength and penetration of reason, extent of learning, exactness of distinction, correctness of style, and clearness of expression, did so abound? And yet was there ever an age, wherein there has been so little sense of the evil of sin, so little love to God, heavenly mindedness, and holiness of life, among the professors of the true religion? Our people do not so much need to have their heads stored, as to have their hearts touched; and they stand in the greatest need of that sort of preaching, that has the greatest tendency to do this.

Those texts, Isa. lviii. 1. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." And Ezek. vi. 11. "Thus saith the Lord God, smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, alas, for all the evil abomination of the house of Israel!" I say these texts, (however the use that some have made of them has been laughed at) will fully justify, a great degree of *pathos*, and manifestation of zeal and fervency in preaching the word of God: They may indeed be abused, to justify that which would be odd and unnatural, amongst us, not making due allowance for difference of manners and customs, in different ages and nations; but let us interpret them how we will, they at least imply, that a most affectionate and earnest manner of delivery, in many cases, becomes a preacher of God's word.

Preaching of the word of God, is commonly spoken of in scripture, in such expressions, as seem to import a loud and earnest speaking; as in Isa. xl. 2. "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her iniquity is pardoned." And ver. 3. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord." Ver. 6. "The voice said cry: And he said, what shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof, as the flower of the field." Jer. ii. 2. "Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, thus saith the Lord, &c." Jonah i. 2. "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it." Isa. lxi. 1, 2. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me, to

preach good tidings to the meek, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the year of vengeance of our God." Isa. lxii. 11. "Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, say ye to the daughter of Zion, behold thy salvation cometh, &c." Rom. x. 18. "Their sound went into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." Jer. xi. 6. "Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them." So chap. xix. 2, and vii. 2. Prov. viii. 1. "Doth not wisdom cry, and understanding put forth her voice?" Ver. 3, 4. "She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors; unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men! And chap. i. 20. "Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets." Chap. ix. 3. "She hath sent forth her maidens, she crieth upon the high places of the city." John vii. 37. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

It seems to be foretold, that the gospel should be especially preached in a loud and earnest manner, at the introduction of the prosperous state of religion, in the latter days. Isa. xl. 9. "O Zion, that bringeth good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain! O Jerusalem, that bringeth good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength! Lift up, and be not afraid! Say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God!" Isa. lii. 7, 8. "How beautiful upon the mountains, are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice." Isa. xxvii. 13. "And it shall come to pass, in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish." And this will be one way, that the church of God will cry at that time, like a travailing woman, when Christ mystical is going to be brought forth; as Rev. xii, at the beginning. It will be by ministers, that are her mouth: And it will be this way, that Christ will then cry like a travailing woman, as in Isa. xlii. 14. "I have long time holden my peace: I have been still, and refrained myself;

now will I cry, like a travailing woman." Christ cries by his ministers, and the church cries by her officers. And it is worthy to be noted, that the word commonly used in the New Testament, that we translate *preach*, properly signifies to *proclaim aloud like a crier.*

Another thing that some ministers have been greatly blamed for, and I think unjustly, is speaking terror to them, that are already under great terrors, instead of comforting them.... Indeed, if ministers in such a case, go about to terrify persons with that which is not true, or to affright them by representing their case worse than it is, or in any respect otherwise than it is, they are to be condemned; but if they terrify them only by still holding forth more light to them, and giving them to understand more of the truth of their case, they are altogether to be justified. When sinners consciences are greatly awakened by the Spirit of God, it is by light imparted to the conscience, enabling them to see their case to be, in some measure, as it is; and if more light be let in, it will terrify them still more: But ministers are not therefore to be blamed that they endeavor to hold forth more light to the conscience, and do not rather alleviate the pain they are under, by intercepting and obstructing that light that shines already. To say any thing to those who have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, to represent their case any otherwise than exceeding terrible, is not to preach the word of God to them; for the word of God reveals nothing but truth, but this is to delude them. Why should we be afraid to let persons, that are in an infinitely miserable condition, know the truth or bring them into the light, for fear it should terrify them? It is light that must convert them, if ever they are converted. The more we bring sinners into the light, while they are miserable, and the light is terrible to them, the more likely it is, that by and by, the light will be joyful to them. The ease, peace and comfort, that natural men enjoy, have their foundation in darkness and blindness; therefore as that darkness vanishes, and light comes in, their peace vanishes, and they are terrified: But that is no good argument, why we should endeavor to hold their darkness,

that we may uphold their comfort. The truth is, that as long as men reject Christ, and do not savingly believe in him, however they may be awakened, and however strict and conscientious, and laborious they may be in religion, they have the wrath of God abiding on them, they are his enemies, and the children of the devil; (as the scripture calls all that be not savingly converted, Mat. xiii. 38. 1 John. iii. 10) and it is uncertain whether they shall ever obtain mercy: God is under no obligation to shew them mercy, nor will he be, if they fast and pray and cry never so much; and they are then especially provoking God, under those terrors, that they stand it out against Christ, and will not accept of an offered Saviour, though they see so much need of him: And seeing this is the truth, they should be told so, that they may be sensible what their case indeed is.

To blame a minister, for thus declaring the truth to those who are under awakenings, and not immediately administering comfort to them, is like blaming a surgeon, because when he has begun to thrust in his lance, whereby he has already put his patient to great pain, and he shrinks and cries out with anguish, he is so cruel that he will not stay his hand, but goes on, to thrust it in further, until he comes to the core of the wound. Such a compassionate physician, who as soon as his patient began to flinch, should withdraw his hand, and go about immediately to apply a plaster, to skin over the wound, and leave the core untouched, would be one that would heal the hurt slightly, crying peace, peace, when there is no peace.

Indeed something else besides terror, is to be preached to them, whose consciences are awakened. The gospel is to be preached to them: They are to be told that there is a Saviour provided, that is excellent and glorious, who has shed his precious blood for sinners, and is every way sufficient to save them, that stands ready to receive them, if they will heartily embrace him; for this is also the truth, as well as that they now are in an infinitely dreadful condition: This is the word of God. Sinners at the same time that they are told how miserable their case is, should be earnestly invited to come and accept of a Saviour, and yield their hearts unto him,

with all the winning, encouraging arguments, for them so to do, that the gospel affords: But this is to induce them to escape from the misery of the condition that they are now in: But not to make them think their present condition less miserable than it is, or at all to abate their uneasiness and distress, while they are in it; that would be the way to quiet them, and fasten them in it, and not to excite them to fly from it..... Comfort, in one sense, is to be held forth to sinners, under awakenings of conscience, i. e. comfort is to be offered to them in Christ, on condition of their flying *from their present miserable state*, to him: But comfort is not to be administered to them, *in their present state*, as any thing that they have now any title to, while out of Christ. No comfort is to be administered to them, from any thing in *them*, any of their qualifications, prayers or other performances, past, present or future; but ministers should, in such cases, strive to their utmost to take all such comforts from them, though it greatly increases their terror. A person that sees himself ready to sink into hell, is ready to strive, some way or other, to lay God under some obligation to him; but he is to be beat off from every thing of that nature, though it greatly increases his terror, to see himself wholly destitute, on every side, of any refuge, or any thing of his own to lay hold of; as a man that sees himself in danger of drowning, is in terror, and endeavors to catch hold on every twig within his reach, and he that pulls away those twigs from him, increases his terror; yet if they are insufficient to save him, and by being in his way, prevent his looking to that which will save him, to pull them away, is necessary to save his life.

If sinners are in any distress, from any error that they embrace, or mistake they are under, that is to be removed: For instance, if they are in terror, from an apprehension that they have committed the unpardonable sin, or that those things have happened to them that are certain signs of reprobation, or any other delusion, such terrors have no tendency to do them any good; for these terrors are from temptation, and not from conviction: But that terror which arises from conviction or a sight of truth, is to be increased; for those that

are most awakened, have great remaining stupidity, they have a sense of but little of that which is; and it is from remaining blindness and darkness, that they see no more; and that remaining blindness is a disease, that we ought to endeavor to remove. I am not afraid to tell sinners, that are most sensible of their misery, that their case is indeed as miserable as they think it to be, and a thousand times more so; for this is the truth. Some may be ready to say, that though it be the truth, yet the truth is not to be spoken at all times, and seems not to be seasonable then: But it seems to me, such truth is never more seasonable than at such a time, when Christ is beginning to open the eyes of conscience. Ministers ought to act as coworkers with him; to take that opportunity, and to the utmost to improve that advantage, and strike while the iron is hot, and when the light has begun to shine, then to remove all obstacles, and use all proper means, that it may come in more fully, and the work be done thoroughly then. And experience abundantly shews, that to take this course, is not of an hurtful tendency, but very much the contrary: I have seen, in very many instances, the happy effects of it, and oftentimes a very speedy happy issue, and never knew any ill consequence, in case of real conviction, and when distress has been only from thence.

I know of but one case, wherein the truth ought to be withheld from sinners in distress of conscience, and that is the case of melancholy: And it is not to be withheld from them then, because the truth tends to do them hurt, but because if we speak the truth to them, sometimes they will be deceived and led into error by it, through that strange disposition there is in them to take things wrong. So that that which as it is spoken, is truth, as it is heard and received, and applied by them, is falsehood; as it will be unless the truth be spoken with abundance of caution and prudence, and consideration of their disposition and circumstances. But the most awful truths of God's word, ought not to be withheld from public congregations, because it may happen that some such melancholic persons may be in it; any more than the Bible is to be witheld from the Christian world, because it is manifest

that there are a great many melancholic persons in Christendom, that exceedingly abuse the awful things contained in the scripture, to their own wounding. Nor do I think that to be of weight, which is made use of by some, as a great and dreadful objection against the terrifying preaching that has of late been in Newengland, viz. that there have been some instances of melancholic persons that have so abused it, that the issue has been the murder of themselves. The objection from hence is no stronger against awakening preaching, than it is against the Bible itself: There are hundreds, and probably thousands of instances, might be produced, of persons that have murdered themselves, under religious melancholy: These murders, probably never would have been, if it had not been for the Bible, or if the world had remained in a state of heathenish darkness. The Bible has not only been the occasion of these sad effects, but of thousands, and I suppose millions, of other cruel murders, that have been committed, in the persecutions that have been raised, that never would have been, if it had not been for the Bible: Many whole countries have been, as it were, deluged with innocent blood, which would not have been, if the gospel never had been preached in the world. It is not a good objection against any kind of preaching, that some men abuse it greatly to their hurt. It has been acknowledged by all divines, as a thing common in all ages, and all Christian countries, that a very great part of those that set under the gospel, do so abuse it, that it only proves an occasion of their far more aggravated damnation, and so of men's eternally murdering their souls; which is an effect infinitely more terrible than the murder of their bodies. It is as unjust to lay the blame of these self murders to those ministers who have declared the awful truths of God's word, in the most lively and affecting manner they were capable of, as it would be to lay the blame of hardening men's hearts, and blinding their eyes, and their more dreadful eternal damnation, to the prophet Isaiah, or Jesus Christ, because this was the consequence of their preaching, with respect to many of their hearers. Isa. vi. 10. John. ix. 39. Matth. xiii. 14. Though a very few have

abused the awakening preaching that has lately been, to so sad an effect as to be the cause of their own temporal death; yet it may be to one such instance, there have been hundreds, yea thousands, that have been saved, by this means, from eternal death.

What has more especially given offence to many, and raised a loud cry against some preachers, as though their conduct were intolerable, is their frighting poor innocent children, with talk of hell fire, and eternal damnation. But if those that complain so loudly of this, really believe, what is the general profession of the country, viz. That all are by nature the children of wrath, and heirs of hell; and that every one that has not been born again, whether he be young or old, is exposed, every moment, to eternal destruction, under the wrath of Almighty God; I say, if they really believe this, then such a complaint and cry as this, bewrays a great deal of weakness and inconsideration. As innocent as children seem to be to us, yet, if they are out of Christ, they are not so in God's sight, but are young vipers, and are infinitely more hateful than vipers, and are in a most miserable condition, as well as grown persons; and they are naturally very senseless and stupid, being *born as the wild asses colt*, and need much to awaken them. Why should we conceal the truth from them? Will those children that have been dealt tenderly with, in this respect, and lived and died insensible of their misery, until they come to feel it in hell, ever thank parents, and others, for their tenderness, in not letting them know what they were in danger of. If parents love towards their children was not blind, it would affect them much more to see their children every day exposed to eternal burnings, and yet senseless, than to see them suffer the distress of that awakening, that is necessary in order to their escape from them, and that tends to their being eternally happy, as the children of God. A child that has a dangerous wound, may need the painful lance, as well as grown persons; and that would be a foolish pity, in such a case, that should hold back the lance, and throw away the life. I have seen the happy effects of dealing plainly, and thoroughly with children, in the concerns of their

souls, without sparing them at all, in many instances; and never knew any ill consequences of it in any one instance.

Another thing, that a great deal has been said against, is having so frequent religious meetings, and spending so much time in religion. And indeed, there are none of the externals of religion, but what are capable of excess: And I believe it is true, that there has not been a due proportion observed in religion of late. We have placed religion too much in the external duties of the first table; we have abounded in religious meetings, and in praying, reading, hearing, singing, and religious conference; and there has not been a proportionable increase of zeal for deeds of charity, and other duties of the second table; (though it must be acknowledged that they are also much increased. But yet it appears to me, that this objection of persons spending too much time in religion, has been in the general groundless. Though worldly business must be done, and persons ought not to neglect the business of their particular callings, yet it is to the honor of God, that a people should be so much in outward acts of religion, as to carry in it, a visible, public appearance, of a great engagedness of mind in it, as the main business of life: And especially is it fit, that at such an extraordinary time, when God appears unusually present with a people, in wonderful works of power and mercy, that they should spend more time than usual in religious exercises, to put honor upon that God that is then extraordinarily present, and to seek his face; as it was with the Christian church in Jerusalem, on occasion of that extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit, soon after Christ's ascension. Acts ii. 46. "And they continued daily with one accord, in the temple, and breaking bread, from house to house." And so it was at Ephesus, at a time of great outpouring of the Spirit there; the Christians there attended public religious exercises, every day, for two years together, Acts. xix. 8, 9, 10. "And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God: But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way, before the multitude, he departed from

them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus; and this continued, by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia, heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." And as to the grand objection, of *six days shalt thou labor*, all that can be understood by it, and all that the very objectors themselves understand by it, is that we *may* follow our secular labors in those six days, that are not the sabbath, and *ought* to be diligent in them: Not but that sometimes, we may turn from them, even within those six days, to keep a day of fasting, or thanksgiving, or to attend a lecture; and that more frequently or rarely, as God's providence and the state of things shall call us, according to the best judgment of our discretion.

Though secular business, as I said before, ought not to be neglected, yet I cannot see how it can be maintained, that religion ought not to be attended, so as in the least to injure our temporal affairs, on any other principles than those of infidelity. None objects against injuring one temporal affair for the sake of another temporal affair of much greater importance; and therefore, if eternal things are as real as temporal things, and are indeed of infinitely greater importance; then why may we not voluntarily suffer, in some measure, in our temporal concerns, while we are seeking eternal riches, and immortal glory? It is looked upon no way improper for a whole nation, to spend considerable time, and much of their outward substance, on some extraordinary temporal occasions, for the sake only of the ceremonies of a public rejoicing; and it would be thought dishonorable to be very exact, about what we spend, or careful lest we injure our estates, on such an occasion: And why should we be exact only with Almighty God, so that it should be a crime to be otherwise than scrupulously careful, lest we injure ourselves in our temporal interest, or put honor upon him, and seek our own eternal happiness? We should take heed that none of us be in any wise like Judas, who greatly complained of needless expense, and waste of outward substance, to put honor upon Christ, when Mary broke her box, and poured the precious ointment on his head: He had indignation within himself on that account,

and cries out, *Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor.* Mark xiv. 3, 4, 5, &c. And John xii. 4, 5, &c.

And besides, if the matter be justly considered and examined, I believe it will be found, that the country has lost no time from their temporal affairs, by the late revival of religion, but have rather gained time; and that more time has been saved from frolicing and tavern haunting, idleness, unprofitable visits, vain talk, fruitless pastimes, and needless diversions, that has lately been spent in extraordinary religion; and probably five times as much has been saved in persons' estates, at the tavern, and in their apparel, as has been spent by religious meetings.

The great complaint that is made against so much time spent in religion, cannot be in general from a real concern that God may be honored, and his will done, and the best good of men promoted; as is very manifest from this, that now there is a much more earnest and zealous outcry made in the country, against this extraordinary religion, than was before, against so much time spent in tavern haunting, vain company keeping, night walking, and other things, which wasted both our time and substance, and injured our moral virtue.

The frequent preaching that has lately been, has in a particular manner been objected against as unprofitable and prejudicial. It is objected that when sermons are heard so very often, one sermon tends to thrust out another; so that persons lose the benefit of all: They say two or three sermons in a week is as much as they can remember and digest. Such objections against frequent preaching, if they are not from an enmity against religion, are for want of duly considering the way that sermons usually profit an auditory. The main benefit that is obtained by preaching, is by impression made upon the mind in the time of it, and not by any effect that arises afterwards by a remembrance of what was delivered. And though an after remembrance of what was heard in a sermon is oftentimes very profitable; yet, for the most part, that re-

membrance is from an impression the words made on the heart in the time of it; and the memory profits, as it renews and increases that impression; and a frequent inculcating the more important things of religion in preaching, has no tendency to rase out such impressions, but to increase them, and fix them deeper and deeper in the mind, as is found by experience. It never used to be objected against, that persons, upon the sabbath, after they have heard two sermons that day, should go home and spend the remaining part of the sabbath in reading the scriptures, and printed sermons; which, in proportion as it has a tendency to affect the mind at all, has as much of a tendency to drive out what they have heard, as if they heard another sermon preached. It seems to have been the practice of the apostles to preach every day in places where they went; yea, though sometimes they continued long in one place, Acts ii. 42, and 46. Acts xix. 8, 9, 10. They did not avoid preaching one day, for fear they should thrust out of the minds of their hearers what they had delivered the day before; nor did Christians avoid going every day to hear, for fear of any such bad effect, as is evident by Acts ii. 42, 46.

There are some things in scripture that seem to signify as much, as that there should be preaching in an extraordinary frequency, at the time when God should be about to introduce that flourishing state of religion that should be in the latter days; as that in Isa. lxii. at the beginning: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, for Jerusalem's sake, I will not rest; until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof, as a lamp that burneth: And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory." And ver. 5, 6. "For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace, day nor night." The destruction of the city of Jericho, is evidently in all its circumstances, intended by God, as a great type of the overthrow of Satan's kingdom; the priests blowing with trumpets at that time, represents

ministers preaching the gospel; the people compassed the city seven days, the priests blowing the trumpets; but when the day was come that the walls of the city were to fall, the priests were more frequent and abundant in blowing their trumpets; there was as much done in one day then, as had been done in seven days before; they compassed the city seven times that day, blowing their trumpets until at length it come to one long and perpetual blast, and then the walls of the city fell down flat. The extraordinary preaching that shall be at the beginning of that glorious jubilee of the church, is represented by the extraordinary sounding of trumpets, throughout the land of Canaan, at the beginning of the year of jubilee; and by the reading of the law, before all Israel, in the year of release, at the feast of tabernacles. And the crowing of the cock, at break of day, which brought Peter to repentance, seems to me to be intended to signify, the awakening of God's church out of their lethargy, wherein they had denied their Lord, by the extraordinary preaching of the gospel, that shall be at the dawning of the day of the churches light and glory. And there seems at this day to be an uncommon hand of divine providence, in animating, enabling, and upholding some ministers in such abundant labors.

Another thing, wherein I think some ministers have been injured, is in being very much blamed for making so much of outcries, faintings, and other bodily effects; speaking of them as tokens of the presence of God, and arguments of the success of preaching; seeming to strive to their utmost to bring a congregation to that pass, and seeming to rejoice in it, yea, even blessing God for it, when they see these effects.

Concerning this I would observe, in the *first* place, that there are many things, with respect to cryings out, falling down, &c. that are charged on ministers, that they are not guilty of. Some would have it, that they speak of these things as certain evidences of a work of the Spirit of God on the hearts of their hearers, or that they esteem these bodily effects themselves to be the work of God, as though the Spirit of God took hold of, and agitated the bodies of men; and some are charged with making these things essential, and

supposing that persons cannot be converted without them; whereas I never yet could see the person that held either of these things.

But for speaking of such effects as probable tokens of God's presence, and arguments of the success of preaching, it seems to me they are not to be blamed; because I think they are so indeed: And therefore when I see them excited by preaching the important truths of God's word, urged and enforced by proper arguments and motives, or are consequent on other means that are good, I do not scruple to speak of them, and to rejoice in them, and bless God for them as such; and that for this (as I think) good reason, viz. that from time to time, upon proper inquiry and examination, and observation of the consequence and fruits, I have found that there are full evidences that the persons in whom these effects appear, are under the influences of God's Spirit, in such cases. Cryings out, in such a manner, and with such circumstances, as I have seen them from time to time, is as much an evidence to me, of the general cause it proceeds from, as language: I have learned the meaning of it, the same way that persons learn the meaning of language, viz. by use and experience. I confess that when I see a great crying out in a congregation, in the manner that I have seen it, when those things are held forth to them that are worthy of their being greatly affected by, I rejoice in it, much more than merely in an appearance of solemn attention, and a shew of affection by weeping; and that because when there have been those outcries, I have found from time to time, a much greater and more excellent effect. To rejoice that the work of God is carried on calmly, without much ado, is in effect to rejoice that it is carried on with less power, or that there is not so much of the influence of God's Spirit: For though the degree of the influence of the Spirit of God, on *particular persons*, is by no means to be judged of by the degree of external appearances, because of the different constitution, tempers, and circumstances of men; yet if there be a very powerful influence of the Spirit of God on a mixed multitude, it will cause some way or other, a great visible commotion.

And as to ministers aiming at such effects, and striving by all means to bring a congregation to that pass, that there should be such an uproar among them; I suppose none aim at it any otherwise, than as they strive to raise the affections of their hearers to such an height, as very often appears in these effects; and if it be so, that those affections are commonly good, and it be found by experience that such a degree of them commonly has a good effect, I think they are to be justified in so doing.

Again, some ministers have been blamed for keeping persons together, that have been under great affections, which have appeared in such extraordinary outward manifestations. Many think this promotes confusion, that persons in such circumstances do but discompose each others minds, and disturb the minds of others; and that therefore it is best they should be dispersed, and that when any in a congregation are strongly seized, so that they cannot forbear outward manifestations of it, they should be removed that others minds may not be diverted.

But I cannot but think that those that thus object go upon quite wrong notions of things: For though persons ought to take heed that they do not make an ado without necessity; for this will be the way in time, to have such appearances lose all their effect; yet the unavoidable manifestations of strong religious affections tend to an happy influence on the minds of bystanders, and are found by experience to have an excellent and durable effect; and so to contrive and order things, that others may have opportunity and advantage to observe them, has been found to be blessed, as a great means to promote the work of God; and to prevent their being in the way of observation, is to prevent the effect of that, which God makes use of, as a principal means of carrying on his work, at such an extraordinary time, viz. example; which is often spoken of in scripture, as one of the chief means by which God would carry on his work, in the time of the prosperity of religion in the latter days: I have mentioned some texts already to this purpose, in what I published before, of *the marks of a work of the true Spirit*; but would here mention some others. In Zech.

ix. 15, 16. Those that in the latter days should be filled, in an extraordinary manner with the Holy Spirit, so as to appear in outward manifestations, and making a noise, are spoken of as those that God, in these uncommon circumstances, will set up to the view of others, as a prize or ensign, by their example and the excellency of their attainments, to animate and draw others, as men gather about an ensign, and run for a prize, a crown and precious jewels, set up in their view. The words are: *And they shall drink, and make a noise, as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar: And the Lord their God shall save them, in that day, as the flock of his people; for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.* (But I shall have occasion to say something more of this scripture afterwards.) Those that make the objection I am upon, instead of suffering this prize or ensign to be in public view, are for having it removed, and hid in some corner. To the like purpose is that, Isa. lxii. 3. "Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." Here it is observable, that it is not said, thou shalt be a crown *upon the head*, but *in the hand* of the Lord....i. e. held forth, in thy beauty and excellency, as a prize, to be bestowed upon others that shall behold thee, and be animated by the brightness and lustre which God shall endow thee with. The great influence of the example of God's people, in their bright and excellent attainments, to propagate religion, in those days, is further signified, in Isa. lx. 3. "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." With ver. 22. "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation." And Zech. x. 8, 9. "And they shall increase as they have increased; and I will sow them among the people." And Hos. ii. 23. "And I will sow her unto me in the earth. So Jer. xxxi. 27.

Another thing that gives great disgust to many, in the disposition that persons shew, under great affections, to speak so much, and with such earnestness and vehemence, to be setting forth the greatness and wonderfulness and importance

of divine and eternal things; and to be so passionately warning, inviting and entreating others.

Concerning which I would say, that I am far from thinking that such a disposition should be wholly without any limits or regulation, (as I shall more particularly shew afterwards;) and I believe some have erred, in setting no bounds, and indulging and encouraging this disposition without any kind of restraint or direction: But yet, it seems to me, that such a disposition in general, is what both reason and scripture will justify. Those that are offended at such things, as though they were unreasonable, are not just: Upon examination it will probably be found, that they have one rule of reasoning about temporal things, and another about spiritual things..... They would not at all wonder, if a person on some very great and affecting occasion, of extraordinary danger or great joy, that eminently and immediately concerns him and others, is disposed to speak much, and with great earnestness, especially to those to whom he is united, in the bonds of dear affection, and great concern for their good. And therefore, if they were just, why would not they allow it in spiritual things? And much *more* in them, agreeably to the vastly greater importance, and more affecting nature of spiritual things, and the concern which true religion causes in men's minds for the good of others, and the disposition it gives and excites to speak God's praises, to shew forth his infinite glory, and talk of all his glorious perfections and works?

That a very great sense, of the right kind, of the importance of the things of religion, and the dangers sinners are in, should sometimes cause an almost insuperable disposition to speak and warn others, is agreeable to Jer. vi. 10, 11. "To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: Behold the word of the Lord is unto them, a reproach; they have no delight in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in; I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of the young men together; for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days." And that true Christians,

when they come to be as it were waked out of sleep, and to be filled with a sweet and joyful sense of the excellent things of religion, by the preaching of the gospel, or by other means of grace, should be disposed to be much in speaking of divine things, though before they were dumb, is agreeable to what Christ says to his church, Cant. vii. 9. "And the roof of thy mouth is like the best wine, for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak." The roof of the churches mouth, is the officers in the church, that preach the gospel; their word is to Christ's beloved, like the best wine, that goes down sweetly; extraordinarily refreshing and enlivening the saints, causing them to speak, though before they were mute and asleep. It is said by some that the people that are the subjects of this work, when they get together, talking loud and earnestly, in their pretended great joys, several in a room, talking at the same time, make a noise just like a company of drunken persons. On which I would observe, that it is foretold that God's people should do so, in that forementioned place, Zech. ix. 15, 16, 17, which I shall now take more particular notice of: The words are as follows: "The Lord of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour and subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise, as through wine, and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar: And the Lord their God shall save them in that day, as the flock of his people; for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up, as an ensign, upon his land: For how great is his goodness! And how great is his beauty! Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids." The words are very remarkable: Here it is foretold, that at the time when Christ shall set up an universal kingdom upon earth, (ver. 20) the children of Zion shall drink, until they are filled like the vessels of the sanctuary: And if we would know what they shall be thus filled with, the prophecy does, in effect, explain itself: They shall be filled, as the vessels of the sanctuary that contained the drink offering, which was wine; and yet the words imply, that it shall not literally be wine that they shall drink, and be filled with, because it is said, they shall drink, and

make a noise, *as through wine*, as if they had drank wine: Which implies that they had not literally done it; and therefore we must understand the words, that they shall drink into that, and be filled with that, which the wine of the drink offering represented, or was a type of, which is the Holy Spirit, as well as the blood of Christ, that new wine that is drunk in our heavenly father's kingdom: They shall be filled with the Spirit, which the apostle sets in opposition to a being drunk with wine, Eph. v. 18. This is the new wine spoken of, ver. 17. It is the same with that *best wine*, spoken of in *Canticles, that goes down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak*. It is here foretold, that the children of Zion, in the latter days, should be filled with that which should make them cheerful, and cause them to make a noise as through wine, and by which these joyful happy persons that are thus filled, shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon God's land, being made joyful, in the extraordinary manifestations of the beauty and love of Christ: As it follows, *How great is his goodness! And how great is his beauty!* And it is further remarkable that it is here foretold, that it should be thus especially amongst young people: *Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids*. It would be ridiculous to understand this of literal bread and wine: Without doubt, the same spiritual blessings are signified by bread and wine here, which were represented by Melchizedeck's bread and wine, and are signified by the bread and wine in the Lord's supper. One of the marginal readings is, *shall make the young men to speak*; which is agreeable to that in Canticles, of the *best wine's causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak*.

We ought not to be, in any measure, like the unbelieving Jews in Christ's time, who were disgusted both with crying out with distress, and with joy. When the poor blind man cried out, before all the multitude, *Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me!* And continued instantly thus doing, the multitude rebuked him, and charged him that he should hold his tongue, Mark x. 46, 47, 48, and Luke xviii. 38, 39. They looked upon it to be a very indecent noise that he made; a

thing very ill becoming him to cause his voice to be heard, so much, and so loud, among the multitude. And when Christ made his solemn and triumphant entry into Jerusalem, (which, I have before observed, was a type of the glory and triumph of the latter days) the whole multitude of the disciples, of all sorts, especially young people, began to rejoice and praise God, with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, *Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!* The Pharisees said to Christ, *master, rebuke thy disciples.* They did not understand such great transports of joy; it seemed to them a very unsuitable and indecent noise and clamor that they made, a confused uproar, many crying out together, as though they were out of their wits; they wondered that Christ would tolerate it. But what says Christ? *I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.* The words seem to intimate as much, as that there was cause enough to constrain those whose hearts were not harder than the very stones, to cry out and make a noise; which is something like that other expression, of *causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.*

When many under great religious affections, are earnestly speaking together, of divine wonders, in various parts of a company, to those that are next to them; some attending to what one says, and others to another, there is something very beautiful in it, provided they do not speak so many as to drown each others voices, that none can hear what any say; there is a greater and more affecting appearance of a joint engagedness of heart, in the love and praises of God. And I had rather see it, than to see one speaking alone, and all attending to what he says; it has more of the appearance of conversation. When a multitude meet on any occasion of temporal rejoicing, freely and cheerfully to converse together, they are not wont to observe the ceremony of but one speaking at a time, while all the rest, in a formal manner, set themselves to attend to what he says; that would spoil all conversation, and turn it into the formality of set speeches, and the solemnity of preaching. It is better for lay persons, when they

speak one to another of the things of God, when they meet together, to speak after the manner of Christian conversation, than to observe the formality of but one speaking at a time, the whole multitude silently and solemnly attending to what he says; which would carry in it too much of the air, of the authority and solemnity of preaching. What the apostle says, 1 Cor. xiv. 29, 30, 31. "Let the prophets speak, two or three, and let the other judge: If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace: For ye may all prophecy, one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted," I say, this does not reach this case; because what the apostle is speaking of, is the solemnity of their religious exercises, in public worship, and persons speaking in the church, by immediate inspiration, and in the use of the gift of prophecy, or some gift of inspiration, in the exercise of which they acted as extraordinary ministers of Christ.

Another thing that some have found fault with, is abounding so much in singing, in religious meetings. Objecting against such a thing as this, seems to arise from a suspicion already established of this work: They doubt of the pretended extraordinary love and joys that attend this work, and so find fault with the manifestations of them. If they thought persons were truly the subjects of an extraordinary degree of divine love, and heavenly rejoicing in God, I suppose they would not wonder at their having a disposition to be much in praise. They will not object against the saints and angels in heaven singing praises and hallelujahs to God, without ceasing, day or night; and therefore doubtless will allow that the more the saints on earth are like them in their dispositions, the more they will be disposed to do like them. They will readily own that the generality of Christians have great reason to be ashamed that they have so little thankfulness, and are no more in praising God, whom they have such infinite cause to praise. And why therefore should Christians be found fault with, for showing a disposition to be much in praising God, and manifesting a delight in that heavenly exercise? To complain of this, is to be too much like the Pharisees, who were disgusted when the multitude of the dis-

ciples began to rejoice, and, with loud voices to praise God, and cry *Hosanna*, when Christ was entering into Jerusalem.

There are many things in scripture that seem to intimate, that praising God, both in speeches and songs, will be what the church of God will very much abound in, in the approaching glorious day. So on the seventh day of compassing the walls of Jericho, when the priests blew with the trumpets, in an extraordinary manner, the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall of the city fell down flat. So the ark was brought back from its banishment, with extraordinary shouting and singing of the whole congregation of Israel. And the places in the prophecies of scripture, that signify that the church of God, in that glorious jubilee that is foretold, shall greatly abound in singing and shouting forth the praises of God, are too many to be mentioned. And there will be cause enough for it: I believe it will be a time wherein both heaven, and earth will be much more full of joy and praise, than ever they were before. But what is more especially found fault with in the singing that is now practised, is making use of hymns of human composure. And I am far from thinking that the book of psalms should be thrown by in our public worship, but that it should always be used in the Christian church, to the end of the world: But I know of no obligation we are under to confine ourselves to it, I can find no command or rule of God's word, that does any more confine us to the words of the scripture in our singing, than it does in our praying; we speak to God in both: And I can see no reason why we should limit ourselves to such particular forms of words, that we find in the Bible, in speaking to him by way of praise, in metre, and with music, than when we speak to him in prose, by way of prayer and supplication. And it is really needful that we should have some other songs besides the psalms of David: It is unreasonable to suppose that the Christian church, should forever, and even in times of her greatest light in her praises of God and the Lamb, be confined only to the words of the old Testament, wherein all the greatest and most glorious things of the gospel, that are infinitely the greatest subjects of her praise, are spoken of un-

der a vail, and not so much as the name of our glorious Redeemer, ever mentioned, but in some dark figure, or as hid under the name of some type. And as to our making use of the words of others, and not those that are conceived by ourselves, it is no more than we do in all our public prayers; the whole worshipping assembly, excepting one only, makes use of the words that are conceived by him that speaks for the rest.

Another thing that many have disliked, is the religious meetings of children, to read and pray together, and perform religious exercises by themselves. What is objected is children's want of that knowledge and discretion, that is requisite, in order to a decent and profitable management of religious exercises. But it appears to me the objection is not sufficient: Children, as they have the nature of men, are inclined to society; and those of them that are capable of society one with another, are capable of the influences of the Spirit of God, in its active fruits; and if they are inclined by a religious disposition, that they have from the Spirit of God, to improve their society one with another, in a religious manner, and to religious purposes, who should forbid them? If they have not discretion to observe method in their religious performances, or to speak sense in all that they say in prayer, they may notwithstanding have a good meaning, and God understands them and it does not spoil or interrupt their devotion one for another. We that are grown persons, have defects in our prayers, that are a thousand times worse in the sight of God, and are a greater confusion, and more absurd nonsense in his eyes, than their childish indiscretions. There is not so much difference before God, between children and grown persons, as we are ready to imagine; we are all poor, ignorant, foolish babes, in his sight: Our adult age does not bring us so much nearer to God, as we are apt to think. God in this work has shewn a remarkable regard to little children; never was there such a glorious work amongst persons in their childhood, as has been of late, in Newengland: He has been pleased in a wonderful manner to perfect praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings; and many of them have

more of that knowledge and wisdom, that pleases him, and renders their religious worship acceptable, than many of the great and learned men of the world: It is they, in the sight of God, are the ignorant and foolish children: These are grown men, and an hundred years old, in comparison with them; and it is to be hoped that the days are coming, prophesied of Isa. lxv. 20, when "the child shall die an hundred years old."

I have seen many happy effects of children's religious meetings; and God has seemed often remarkably to own them in their meetings, and really descended from heaven to be amongst them: I have known several probable instances of children's being converted at such meetings. I should therefore think, that if children appear to be really moved to it, by a religious disposition, and not merely from a childish affectation of imitating grown persons, they ought by no means to be discouraged or discountenanced: But yet it is fit that care should be taken of them, by their parents, and pastors, to instruct and direct them, and to correct imprudent conduct and irregularities, if they are perceived; or any thing by which the devil may pervert and destroy the design of their meetings. All should take heed that they do not find fault with, and despise the religion of children, from an evil principle, lest they should be like the chief priests and scribes, who were sore displeased at the religious worship and praises of little children, and the honor they gave Christ in the temple. We have an account of it, and what Christ said upon it, in Matth. xxi. 15, 16. "And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying Hosanna to the son of David, they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, thou hast perfected praise?"

PART IV.

Shewing what things are to be corrected or avoided in promoting this WORK, *or in our behavior under it.*

HAVING thus observed, in some instances, wherein the conduct of those that have appeared to be the subjects of this work, or have been zealous to promote it, has been objected against, or complained of, without or beyond just cause, I proceed now in the

II. Place, to shew what things ought to be corrected or avoided.

Many that are zealous for this glorious work of God, are heartily sick of the great noise there is in the country, about *imprudences* and *disorders*: They have heard it so often from the mouths of opposers that they are prejudiced against the sound; and they look upon it that that which is called a being *prudent* and *regular*, which is so much insisted on, is no other than being asleep, or cold and dead in religion, and that the great imprudence that is so much cried out of, is only a being alive, and engaged in the things of God: And they are therefore rather confirmed in any practice, than brought off from it, by the clamor they hear against it, as imprudent and irregular. And to tell the truth, the cry of irregularity and imprudence has been much more in the mouths of those that have been enemies to the main of the work than others; for they have watched for the halting of the zealous, and eagerly catched at any thing that has been wrong, and have greatly insisted on it, made the most of it and magnified it; especially have they watched for errors in zealous preachers, that are much in reproving and condemning the wickedness of the times: They would therefore do well to consider that scripture, Isa. xxix. 20, 21. "The scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity, are cut off, that make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in

the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought." They have not only too much insisted on, and magnified real errors, but have very injuriously charged them as guilty, in things wherein they have been innocent, and have done their duty. This has so prejudiced the minds of some, that they have been ready to think that all that has been said about errors and imprudences, was injurious and from an ill spirit; and has confirmed them in it, that there is no such thing as any prevailing imprudences; and it has made them less cautious and suspicious of themselves, lest they should err. Herein the devil has had an advantage put into his hands, and has taken the advantage; and, doubtless, has been too subtle for some of the true friends of religion. That would be a strange thing indeed, if in so great a commotion and revolution, and such a new state of things, wherein so many have been engaged, none have been guilty of any imprudence; it would be such a revival of religion, as never was yet, if among so many men, not guided by infallible inspiration, there had not been prevailing a pretty many notable errors in judgment and conduct; our young preachers, and young converts, must in general vastly exceed Luther, the head of the reformation, who was guilty of a great many excesses, in that great affair, in which God made him the chief instrument.

If we look back into the history of the church of God in past ages, we may observe that it has been a common device of the devil, to overset a revival of religion, when he finds he can keep men quiet and secure no longer, then to drive them to excesses and extravagances. He holds them back as long as he can, but when he can do it no longer, then he will push them on, and if possible, run them upon their heads. And it has been by these means chiefly, that he has been successful, in several instances, to overthrow most hopeful and promising beginnings: Yea, the principal means by which the devil was successful, by degrees, to overset that grand religious revival of the world, that was in the primitive ages of christianity, and in a manner, to overthrow the Christian church through the earth, and to make way for, and bring on the great antichristian apostacy, that masterpiece of

the devil's work, was to improve the indiscreet zeal of Christians, to drive them into those three extremes, of *enthusiasm*, *superstition*, and *severity towards opposers*; which should be enough for an everlasting warning to the Christian church.

Though the devil will do his diligence to stir up the open enemies of religion, yet he knows what is for his interest so well, that in a time of revival of religion, his main strength shall be tried with the friends of it, and he will chiefly exert himself in his attempts upon them, to mislead them. One truly zealous person, in the time of such an event, that seems to have a great hand in the affair, and draws the eyes of many upon him, may do more, through satan's being too subtle for him) to hinder the work, than an hundred great, and strong, and open opposers.

In the time of a great work of Christ, his hands, with which he *works*, are often wounded in the house of his friends; and his work hindered chiefly by them: So that if any one inquires, as in Zech. xiii. 6. "What are those wounds in thine hands?" He may answer, "Those, with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

The errors of the friends of the work of God, and especially of the great promoters of it, give vast advantage to the enemies of such a work. Indeed there are many things that are no errors, but are only duties faithfully and thoroughly done, that wound the minds of such persons more, and are more cross to them, than real errors: But yet one real error gives opposers as much advantage, and hinders and clogs the work as much as ten that are only supposed ones. Real errors do not fret and gaul the enemies of religion, so much as those things that are strictly right; but they encourage them more; they give them liberty and open a gap for them; so that some that before kept their enmity burning in their own bowels, and durst not show themselves, will on such an occasion take courage, and give themselves vent, and their rage will be like that of an enemy let loose; and those that lay still before, having nothing to say, but what they would be ashamed of, (agreeable to Tit. ii. 8.) when they have such a weapon put into their hands will fight with all violence. And indeed

the enemies of religion would not know what to do for weapons to fight with, were it not for the errors of the friends of it; and so must soon fall before them. And besides in real errors, things that are truly disagreeable to the rules of God's word, we cannot expect the divine protection, and that God will appear on our side, as if our errors were only supposed ones.

Since therefore the errors of the friends and promoters of such a glorious work of God, are of such dreadful consequence; and seeing the devil, being sensible of this, is so assiduous, and watchful and subtle in his attempts with them, and has thereby been so successful to overthrow religion heretofore, certainly such persons ought to be exceeding circumspect and vigilant, diffident and jealous of themselves, and humbly dependent on the guidance of the good Shepherd. 1 Pet. iv. 7. "Be sober and watch unto prayer." And chap. v. 8. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about."....For persons to go on resolutely in a kind of heat and vehemence, despising admonition and correction, being confident that they must be in the right, because they are full of the spirit, is directly contrary to the import of these words, be *sober*, *be vigilant*.

It is a mistake. I have observed in some, by which they have been greatly exposed, to their wounding, that they think they are in no danger of going astray, or being misled by the devil, because they are near to God; and so have no jealous eye upon themselves, and neglect vigilance and circumspection, as needless in their case. They say they do not think that God will leave them to dishonor him, and wound religion as long as they keep near to him: And I believe so too, as long as they keep near to God in that respect, that they maintain an universal and diligent watch, and care to do their duty, and avoid sin, and snares, with diffidence in themselves, and humble dependence and prayerfulness: But not merely because they are near to God, in that respect, that they now are receiving blessed communications from God, in refreshing views of him; if at the same time they let down their watch, and are not jealous over their own hearts, by reason of its re-

maining blindness and corruption, and a subtle adversary. It is a grand error, for persons to think they are out of danger of the devil, and a corrupt deceitful heart, even in their highest flights, and most raised frames of spiritual joy. For persons in such a confidence, to cease to be jealous of themselves, and to neglect watchfulness and care, is a presumption by which I have known many wofully ensnared. However highly we may be favored with divine discoveries and comforts, yet as long as we are in the world, we are in the enemy's country; and therefore that direction of Christ to his disciples, is never out of date in this world, Luke xxi. 36, "watch and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the son of man."

It was not out of date with the disciples, to whom it was given, after they came to be filled so full with the Holy Ghost, and out of their bellies flowed rivers of living water, by that great effusion of the Spirit upon them, that began on the day of pentecost. And though God stands ready to protect his people, especially those that are near to him, yet he expects great care and labor of all; and that we should put on the whole armor of God, that we may stand in the evil day: And whatever spiritual privileges we are raised to, we have no warrant to expect protection in any other way; for God has appointed this whole life, as a state of labor, to be all, as a race or a battle; the state of rest wherein we shall be so out of danger, as to have no need of watching and fighting, is reserved for another world. I have known it in abundance of instances, that the devil is come in very remarkably, even in the midst of the most exalted, and upon some accounts excellent frames: It may seem a great mystery that it should be so; but it is no greater mystery, than that Christ should be taken captive by the devil, and carried into the wilderness, immediately after the heavens had been opened to him, and the Holy Ghost descended like a dove upon him, and he heard that comfortable, joyful voice from the Father, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* In like manner Christ in the heart of a Christian, is oftentimes as it were taken by the devil, and carried captive into a wilderness, pres-

ently after heaven has been, as it were opened to the soul, and the Holy Ghost has descended upon it like a dove, and God has been sweetly owning the believer, and testifying his favor to him as his beloved child.

It is therefore a great error, and sin in some persons, at this day, that they are fixed in their way, in some things that others account errors, and will not hearken to admonition and counsel, but are confident that they are in the right of it, in those practices that they find themselves disposed to, because God is much with them, and they have great degrees of the Spirit of God. There were some such in the apostles' days: The apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, was sensible that some of them would not be easily convinced that they had been in any error, because they looked upon themselves *spiritual*, or full of the Spirit of God. 1 Cor. xiv. 37, 38. "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowlege that the things that I write unto you, are the commandment of the Lord; but if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."

And although those that are spiritual amongst us, have no infallible apostle to admonish them, yet let me intreat them, by the love of Christ, calmly and impartially to weigh what may be said to them, by one that is their hearty and fervent friend, (although an inferior worm) in giving his humble opinion, concerning the errors that have been committed, or that we may be exposed to, in methods or practices that have been, or may be fallen into, by the zealous friends or promoters of this great work of God.

In speaking of the errors that have been, or that we are in danger of, I would in the

First place, take notice of the causes whence the errors that attend a great revival of religion usually arise; and as I go along, take notice of some particular errors that arise from each of those causes.

Secondly, Observe some errors, that some have lately gone into, that have been owing to the influence of several of those causes conjunctly.

As to the first of these, the errors that attend a great revival of religion, usually arise from these three things:

1. Undiscerned spiritual pride.
2. Wrong principles.
3. Ignorance of Satan's advantages and devices.

The first, and the worst cause of errors, that prevail in such a state of things, is *spiritual pride*. This is the main door, by which the devil comes into the hearts of those that are zealous for the advancement of religion. It is the chief inlet of smoke from the bottomless pit, to darken the mind, and mislead the judgment: This is the main handle by which the devil has hold of religious persons, and the chief source of all the mischief that he introduces, to clog and hinder a work of God. This cause of error is the main spring, or at least the main support of all the rest. Until this disease is cured, medicines are in vain applied to heal other diseases. It is by this that the mind defends itself in other errors, and guards itself against light, by which it might be corrected and reclaimed. The spiritually proud man is full of light already, he does not need instruction, and is ready to despise the offer of it. But if this disease be healed, other things are easily rectified. The humble person is like a little child, he easily receives instruction; he is jealous over himself, sensible how liable he is to go astray; and therefore if it be suggested to him that he does so, he is ready most narrowly and impartially to inquire. Nothing sets a person so much out of the devil's reach, as humility, and so prepares the mind for true divine light, without darkness, and so clears the eye to look on things, as they truly are. Psal. xxv. 9. "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek he will teach his way." Therefore we should fight, neither with small, nor with great, but with the king of Israel: Our first care should be to rectify the heart, and pull the beam out of our eye, and then we shall see clearly.

I know that a great many things at this day, are very injuriously laid to the pride of those that are zealous in the cause of God. When any person appears, in any respect, remarkably distinguished in religion from others, if he professes

those spiritual comforts and joys that are greater than ordinary, or if he appears distinguishingly zealous in religion, if he exerts himself more than others do, in the cause of religion, or if he seems to be distinguished with success, ten to one, but it will immediately awaken the jealousy of those that are about him ; and they will suspect, (whether they have cause or no) that he is very proud of his goodness, and that he affects to have it thought that no body is so good as he ; and all his talk is heard, and all his behavior beheld, with this prejudice. Those that are themselves cold and dead, and especially such as never had any experience of the power of godliness on their own hearts, are ready to entertain such thoughts of the best Christians; which arises from a secret enmity against vital and fervent piety.

But then those that are zealous Christians should take heed that this injuriousness of those that are cold in religion does not prove a snare to them, and the devil does not take advantage from it, to blind their eyes from beholding what there is indeed of this nature in their hearts, and make them think, because they are charged with pride wrongfully, and from an ill spirit, in many things, that therefore it is so in every thing.... Alas, how much pride have the best of us in our hearts! It is the worst part of the body of sin and death : It is the first sin that ever entered into the universe, and the last that is rooted out ; It is God's most stubborn enemy !

The corruption of nature may all be resolved into two things, *pride* and *worldly mindedness*, the *devil* and the *beast*, or *self* and the *world*. These are the two pillars of Dagon's temple, on which the whole house leans. But the former of these is every way, the worst part of the corruption of nature ; it is the first born son of the devil, and his image in the heart of man chiefly consists in it ; it is the last thing in a sinner that is overborn by conviction, in order to conversion ; and here is the saint's hardest conflict ; it is the last thing that he obtains a good degree of conquest over, and liberty from ; it is that which most directly militates against God, and is most contrary to the Spirit of the Lamb of God ; and it is most like the devil its father, in a serpentine deceitfulness and secrecy ;

it lies deepest, and is most active, is most ready secretly to mix itself with every thing.

And of all kinds of pride, spiritual pride is upon many accounts the most hateful; it is most like the devil; it is most like the sin that he committed in an heaven of light and glory, where he was exalted high in divine knowledge, honor, beauty and happiness. Pride is much more difficultly discerned than any other corruption, for this reason, that the nature of it does very much consist in a person's having too high a thought of himself: But no wonder that he that has too high a thought of himself, does not know it; for he necessarily thinks that the opinion he has of himself, is what he has just grounds for, and therefore not too high; if he thought such an opinion of himself was without just grounds, he would therein cease to have it. But of all kinds of pride, spiritual pride is the most hidden, and difficultly discovered; and that for this reason, because those that are spiritually proud, their pride consists, much in an high conceit of those two things, viz. their *light*, and their *humility*; both which are a strong prejudice against a discovery of their pride. Being proud of their *light*, that makes them not jealous of themselves; he that thinks a clear light shines around him, is not suspicious of an enemy lurking near him, unseen: And then being proud of their *humility*, that makes them least of all jealous of themselves in that particular, viz. as being under the prevalence of pride. There are many sins of the heart that are very secret in their nature, and difficultly discerned. The Psalmist says, Psal. xix. 12. "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults." But spiritual pride is the most secret of all sins. The heart is so deceitful and unsearchable in nothing in the world, as it is in this matter, and there is no sin in the world, that men are so confident in, and so difficultly convinced of: The very nature of it is to work selfconfidence, and drive away selfdiffidence, and jealousy of any evil of that kind. There is no sin so much like the devil, as this, for secrecy and subtlety, and appearing in a great many shapes, undiscerned and unsuspected, and appearing as an angel of light: It takes occasion to arise from every thing; it perverts and

abuses every thing, and even the exercises of real grace, and real humility, as an occasion to exert itself: It is a sin that has, as it were many lives; if you kill it, it will live still; if you mortify and suppress it in one shape, it rises in another; if you think it is all gone, yet it is there still: There are a great many kinds of it, that lie in different forms and shapes, one under another, and encompass the heart like the coats of an onion; if you pull off one there is another underneath..... We had need therefore to have the greatest watch imaginable, over our hearts, with respect to this matter, and to cry most earnestly to the great searcher of hearts, for his help. He that trusts his own heart is a fool.

God's own people should be the more jealous of themselves, with respect to this particular, at this day, because the temptations that many have to this sin are exceeding great: The great and distinguishing privileges to which God admits many of his saints, and the high honors that he puts on some ministers, are great trials of persons in this respect. It is true that great degrees of the spiritual presence of God tend greatly to mortify pride and all corruption; but yet, though in the experience of such favors there be much to restrain pride one way, there is much to tempt and provoke it another; and we shall be in great danger thereby without great watchfulness and prayerfulness. There was much in the circumstances that the angels that fell, were in, in heaven, in their great honors and high privileges, in beholding the face of God, and view of his infinite glory, to cause in them exercises of humility, and to keep them from pride; yet through want of watchfulness in them, their great honor and heavenly privilege proved to be to them, an undoing temptation to pride, though they had no principle of pride in their hearts to expose them. Let no saint therefore, however eminent, and however near to God, think himself out of danger of this: He that thinks himself most out of danger, is indeed most in danger. The apostle Paul, who doubtless was as eminent a saint as any are now, was not out of danger, even just after he was admitted to see God in the third heavens, by the information he himself gives us, 2 Cor. xii. chap. And yet doubtless,

what he saw in heaven of the ineffable glory of the divine Being, had a direct tendency to make him appear exceeding little and vile in his own eyes.

Spiritual pride in its own nature is so secret, that it is not so well discerned by immediate intuition on the thing itself, as by the effects and fruits of it; some of which, I would mention, together with the contrary fruits of pure Christian humility.

Spiritual pride disposes to speak of other persons sins, their enmity against God and his people, the miserable delusion of hypocrites and their enmity against vital piety, and the deadness of some saints, with bitterness, or with laughter and levity, and an air of contempt; whereas pure Christian humility rather disposes, either to be silent about them, or to speak of them with grief and pity.

Spiritual pride is very apt to suspect others: Whereas an humble saint is most jealous of himself, he is so suspicious of nothing in the world as he is of his own heart. The spiritually proud person is apt to find fault with other saints, that they are low in grace, and to be much in observing how cold and dead they be, and crying out of them for it, and to be quick to discern and take notice of their deficiences: But the eminently humble Christian has so much to do at home, and sees so much evil in his own heart, and is so concerned about it, that he is not apt to be very busy with others' hearts; he complains most of himself, and cries out of his own coldness and lowness in grace, and is apt to esteem others better than himself, and is ready to hope that there is no body but what has more love and thankfulness to God than he, and cannot bear to think that others should bring forth no more fruit to God's honor than he. Some that have spiritual pride mixed with high discoveries and great transports of joy, that dispose them in an earnest manner to talk to others, are apt, in such frames, to be calling upon other Christians that are about them, and sharply reproving them for their being so cold and lifeless. And there are some others that behave themselves very differently from these, who in their raptures are overwhelmed with a sense of their own vileness; and when they

have extraordinary discoveries of God's glory, are all taken up about their own sinfulness; and though they also are disposed to speak much and very earnestly, yet it is very much in crying out of themselves, and exhorting fellow Christians, but in a charitable and humble manner. Pure Christian humility disposes a person to take notice of every thing that is in any respect good in others, and to make the best of it, and to diminish their failings; but to have his eye chiefly on those things that are bad in himself, and to take much notice of every thing that aggravates them.

In a contrariety to this, it has been the manner in some places, or at least the manner of some persons, to speak of almost every thing that they see amiss in others, in the most harsh, severe and terrible language. It is frequent with them to say of others opinions or conduct or advice, or of their coldness, their silence, their caution, their moderation, and their prudence, and many other things that appear in them, that they are from the devil, or from hell; that such a thing is devilish, or hellish, or cursed, and that such persons are serving the devil, or the devil is in them, that they are soul murderers, and the like; so that the words *devil* and *hell* are almost continually in their mouths. And such kind of language they will commonly use, not only towards wicked men, but towards them that they themselves allow to be the true children of God, and also towards ministers of the gospel and others that are very much their superiors. And they look upon it a virtue and high attainment, thus to behave themselves.... *Oh*, say they, *we must be plain hearted and bold for Christ, we must declare war against sin wherever we see it, we must not mince the matter in the cause of God, and when speaking for Christ.* And to make any distinction in persons, or to speak the more tenderly, because that which is amiss is seen in a superior, they look upon as very mean for a follower of Christ, when speaking in the cause of his master.

What a strange device of the devil is here to overthrow all Christian meekness and gentleness, and even all shew and appearance of it, and to defile the mouths of the children of God, and to introduce the language of common sailors among the

followers of Christ, under a cloak of high sanctity and zeal and boldness for Christ! And it is a remarkable instance of the weakness of the human mind, and how much too cunning the devil is for us!

The grand defence of this way of talking is, that they say no more than what is true; they only speak the truth without mincing the matter; and that true Christians that have a great sight of the evil of sin, and acquaintance with their own hearts know it to be true, and therefore will not be offended to hear such harsh expressions made use of concerning them and their sins; it is only (say they) hypocrites, or cold and dead Christians, that are provoked and feel their enmity rise on such an occasion.

But it is a grand mistake to think that we may commonly use concerning one another all such language as represents the worst of each other, according to strict truth. It is really true that every kind of sin, and every degree of it, is devilish and from hell, and is cursed, hellish, and condemned or damned: And if persons had a full sight of their hearts they would think no terms too bad for them; they would look like beasts, like serpents, and like devils to themselves; they would be at a loss for language to express what they see in themselves, the worst terms they could think of would seem as it were faint to represent what they see in themselves. But shall a child therefore, from time to time, use such language concerning an excellent and eminently holy father or mother, as that the devil is in them, that they have such and such devilish, cursed dispositions, that they commit every day hundreds of hellish, damned acts, and that they are cursed dogs, hell hounds, and devils? And shall the meanest of the people be justified, in commonly using such language concerning the most excellent magistrates, or their most eminent ministers? I hope nobody has gone to this height: But the same pretences of boldness, plain heartedness, and declared war against sin, will as well justify these things as the things they are actually made use of to justify. If we proceed in such a manner, on such principles as these, what a face will be introduced upon the church of Christ, the little

beloved flock of that gentle shepherd the Lamb of God? What a sound shall we bring into the house of God, into the family of his dear little children? How far off shall we soon banish that lovely appearance of humility, sweetness, gentleness, mutual honor, benevolence, complacence, and an esteem of others above themselves, which ought to clothe the children of God all over? Not but that Christians should watch over one another, and in any wise reprove one another, and be much in it and do it plainly and faithfully; but it does not thence follow that dear brethren in the family of God, in rebuking one another, should use worse language than Michael the archangel durst use when rebuking the devil himself.

Christians that are but fellow worms ought at least to treat one another with as much humility and gentleness as Christ that is infinitely above them treats them. But how did Christ treat his disciples when they were so cold towards him and so regardless of him, at the time when his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, and he in a dismal agony was crying and sweating blood for them, and they would not watch with him, and allow him the comfort of their company one hour in his great distress, though he once and again desired it of them? One would think that then was a proper time if ever to have reproved them for a devilish, hellish, cursed and damned slothfulness and deadness. But after what manner does Christ reprove them? Behold his astonishing gentleness! Says he, *What, could ye not watch with me one hour? The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.* And how did he treat Peter when he was ashamed of his master, while he was made a mocking stock and a spitting stock for him? Why he looked upon him with a look of love, and melted his heart.

And though we read that Christ once turned and said unto Peter, on a certain occasion, *get thee behind me Satan;* and this may seem like an instance of harshness and severity in reproving Peter; yet I humbly conceive that this is by many taken wrong, and that this is indeed no instance of Christ's severity in his treatment of Peter, but on the contrary, of his wonderful gentleness and grace, distinguishing between Peter

and the devil in him, not laying the blame of what Peter had then said, or imputing it to him, but to the devil that influenced him. Christ saw the devil then present, secretly influencing Peter to do the part of a tempter to his master; and therefore Christ turned him about to Peter, in whom the devil then was, and spake to the devil and rebuked him. Thus the grace of Christ does not behold iniquity in his people, imputes not what is amiss in them to them, but to sin that dwells in them, and to Satan that influences them. But to return,

Spiritual pride often disposes persons to singularity in external appearance, to affect a singular way of speaking, to use a different sort of dialect from others, or to be singular in voice, or air of countenance or behavior: But he that is an eminently humble Christian, though he will be firm to his duty, however singular he is in it; he will go in the way that leads to heaven alone, though all the world forsakes him; yet he delights not in singularity for singularity's sake, he does not affect to set up himself to be viewed and observed as one distinguished, as desiring to be accounted better than others, or despising their company, or an union and conformity to them; but on the contrary is disposed to become all things to all men, and to yield to others, and conform to them and please them, in every thing but sin. Spiritual pride commonly occasions a certain stiffness and inflexibility in persons, in their own judgment and their own ways; whereas the eminently humble person, though he be inflexible in his duty, and in those things wherein God's honor is concerned; and with regard to temptation to those things he apprehends to be sinful, though in never so small a degree, he is not at all of a yieldable spirit, but is like a brazen wall; yet in other things he is of a pliable disposition, not disposed to set up his own opinion, or his own will; he is ready to pay deference to others' opinions, and loves to comply with their inclinations, and has a heart that is tender and flexible like a little child.

Spiritual pride disposes persons to affect separation, to stand at a distance from others, as better than they, and loves the shew and appearance of the distinction: But on the con-

trary, the eminently humble Christian is ready to look upon himself as not worthy that others should be united to him, to think himself more brutish than any man, and worthy to be cast out of human society, and especially unworthy of the society of God's children; and though he will not be a companion with one that is visibly Christ's enemy, and delights most in the company of lively Christians, will choose such for his companions, and will be most intimate with them, and does not at all delight to spend away much time in the company of those that seem to relish no conversation but about worldly things; yet he does not love the appearance of an open separation from visible Christians, as being a kind of distinct company from them, that are one visible company with him by Christ's appointment, and will as much as possible shun all appearances of a superiority, or distinguishing himself as better than others: His universal benevolence delights in the appearance of union with his fellow creatures, and will maintain it as much as he possibly can, without giving open countenance to iniquity, or wounding his own soul; and herein he follows the example of his meek and lowly Redeemer, who did not keep up such a separation and distance as the Pharisees, but freely eat with publicans and sinners, that he might win them.

The eminently humble Christian is as it were clothed with lowliness, mildness, meekness, gentleness of spirit and behavior, and with a soft, sweet, condescending, winning air and deportment; these things are just like garments to him, he is clothed all over with them. 1 Pet. v. 5. "And be clothed with humility." Col. iii. 12. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering.

Pure Christian humility has no such thing as roughness, or contempt, or fierceness or bitterness in its nature; it makes a person like a little child, harmless and innocent, and that none need to be afraid of; or like a lamb destitute of all bitterness, wrath, anger, and clamor, agreeable to Eph. iv. 31.

With such a spirit as this ought especially zealous ministers of the gospel to be clothed, and those that God is pleas-

ed to improve as instruments in his hands of promoting his work: They ought indeed to be thorough in preaching the word of God, without mincing the matter at all; in handling the sword of the Spirit, as the ministers of the Lord of Hosts, they ought not to be mild and gentle; they are not to be gentle and moderate in searching and awakening the conscience, but should be sons of thunder: The word of God, which is in itself sharper than any two edged sword, ought not to be sheathed by its ministers, but so used that its sharp edges may have their full effect, even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, joints and marrow; (provided they do it without judging particular persons, leaving it to conscience and the Spirit of God to make the particular application:) But all their conversation should savor of nothing but lowliness and good will, love and pity to all mankind; so that such a spirit should be like a sweet odor diffused around them wherever they go, or like a light shining about them, their faces should, as it were shine with it; they should be like lions to guilty consciences, but like lambs to men's persons. This would have no tendency to prevent the awakening of men's consciences, but on the contrary would have a very great tendency to awaken them; it would make way for the sharp sword to enter; it would remove the obstacles, and make a naked breast for the arrow. Yea, the amiable, Christ like conversation of such ministers, in itself would terrify the consciences of men, as well as their terrible preaching; both would cooperate one with another, to subdue the hard, and bring down the proud heart. If there had been, constantly and universally observable such a behavior as this in itinerant preachers, it would have terrified the consciences of sinners, ten times as much as all the invectives, and the censorious talk there has been concerning particular persons, for their opposition, hypocrisy, delusion, pharisaism, &c. These things in general have rather stupified sinners consciences; they take them up, and make use of them as a shield, wherewith to defend themselves from the sharp arrows of the word, that are shot by these preachers: The enemies of the present work have been glad of these things with all their hearts. Many of the most bitter

of them are probably such as in the beginning of this work had their consciences something galled and terrified with it; but these errors of awakening preachers are the things they chiefly make use of as plaisters to heal the sore that was made in their consciences.

Spiritual pride takes great notice of opposition and injuries that are received, and is apt to be often speaking of them, and to be much in taking notice of the aggravations of them, either with an air of bitterness or contempt: Whereas pure unmixed Christian humility, disposes a person rather to be like his blessed Lord, when reviled, dumb, not opening his mouth, but committing himself in silence to him that judgeth righteously. The eminently humble Christian, the more clamorous and furious the world is against him, the more silent and still will he be; unless it be in his closet, and there he will not be still. Our blessed Lord Jesus seems never to have been so silent as when the world compassed him round, reproaching, buffetting, and spitting on him, with loud and virulent outcries, and horrid cruelties.

There has been a great deal too much talk of late, among many of the true and zealous friends of religion, about opposition and persecution. It becomes the followers of the Lamb of God, when the world is in an uproar about them, and full of clamor against them, not to raise another noise to answer it, but to be still and quiet: It is not beautiful, at such a time to have pulpits and conversation ring with the sound, *persecution, persecution*, or with abundant talk about Pharisees, carnal persecutors, and the seed of the serpent.

Meekness and quietness among God's people, when opposed and reviled, would be the surest way to have God remarkably to appear for their defence. It is particularly observed of Moses, on the occasion of Aaron and Miriam their envying him, and rising up in opposition against him, that he *was very meek, above all men upon the face of the earth*, Num. xii. 3. Doubtless because he remarkably showed his meekness on that occasion, being wholly silent under the abuse. And how remarkable is the account that follows of God's being as it were suddenly roused to appear for his vindication? And

what high honor did he put upon Moses? And how severe were his rebukes of his opposers? The story is very remarkable, and worth every one's observing. Nothing is so effectual to bring God down from heaven in the defence of his people, as their patience and meekness under sufferings. When Christ *girds his sword upon his thigh, with his glory and majesty, and in his majesty rides prosperously, his right hand teaching him terrible things, it is because of truth and* MEEKNESS *and righteousness.* Psal. xlv. 3, 4. *God will cause judgment to be heard from Heaven; the earth shall fear and be still, and God will arise to judgment,* to save all the MEEK of the earth. Psal. lxxvi. 8, 9. *He will lift up the* meek, *and cast the wicked down to the ground.* Psal. cxlvii. 6. *He will reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth, and will smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips will he slay the wicked.* Isa. xi. 4. The great commendation that Christ gives the church of Philadelphia, is that, *Thou hast kept the word of my patience,* Rev. iii. 10. And we may see what reward he promises her in the preceeding verse, "Behold I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship at thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." And thus it is, that we might expect to have Christ appear for us, if under all reproaches we are loaded with, we behave ourselves with a lamb like meekness and gentleness, but if our spirits are raised, and we are vehement and noisy with our complaints under color of Christian zeal, this will be to take upon us our own defence, and God will leave it with us to vindicate our cause as well as we can: Yea, if we go on in a way of bitterness, and high censuring, it will be the way to have him rebuke us, and put us to shame before our enemies.

Here some may be ready to say, "It is not in our own cause, that we are thus vehement, but it is in the cause of God; and the apostle directed the primitive Christians to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." But how was it that the primitive Christians contended earnestly for the faith? They defended the truth with arguments,

and a holy conversation; but yet gave their reasons with meekness and fear: They contended earnestly for the faith by fighting violently against their own unbelief, and the corruptions of their hearts, yea, they resisted unto blood striving against sin; but the blood that was shed in this earnest strife, was their own blood, and not the blood of their enemies. It was *in the cause of God*, that Peter was so fierce, and drew his sword, and began to smite with it; but Christ bids him put up his sword again, telling him that they that take the sword shall perish by the sword; and while Peter wounds, Christ heals. They contend the most violently, and are the greatest conquerors in a time of persecution, who bear it with the greatest meekness and patience.

Great humility improves even the reflections and reproaches of enemies, to put upon serious selfexamination, whether or no there be not some just cause, whether they have not in some respect given occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully: Whereas spiritual pride improves such reflections to make them the more bold and confident, and to go the greater lengths in that for which they are found fault with. I desire it may be considered whether there has been nothing amiss of late, among the true friends of vital piety in this respect; and whether the words of David, when reviled by Michal, have not been misinterpreted and misapplied to justify them in it, when he said I will be yet more vile, and will be base in mine own sight. The import of his words is that he would humble himself yet more before God, being sensible that he was far from being sufficiently abased; and he signifies this to Michal, and that he longed to be yet lower, and had designed already to abase himself more in his behavior; not that he would go the greater length, to shew his regardlessness of her revilings; that would be to exalt himself, and not more to abase himself, as more vile in his own sight.

Another effect of spiritual pride is a certain unsuitable and selfconfident boldness before God and men. Thus some in their great rejoicings before God, have not paid a sufficient regard to that rule, in Psal. ii. 11. They have not rejoiced with a reverential trembling, in a proper sense of the awful

majesty of God, and the awful distance between God and them. And there has also been an improper boldness before men, that has been encouraged and defended, by a misapplication of that scripture, Prov. xxix. 25. "The fear of man bringeth a snare." As though it became all persons, high and low, men, women and children, in all religious conversation, wholly to divest themselves of all manner of shamefacedness, modesty or reverence towards man; which is a great error, and quite contrary to scripture. There is a fear of reverence that is due to some men. Rom. xiii. 7. "Fear, to whom fear: Honor, to whom honor." And there is a fear of modesty and shamefacedness, in inferiors towards superiors, that is amiable, and required by Christian rules. 1 Pet. iii. 2. "While they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear." And 1 Tim. ii. 9. "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves, in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety." And the apostle means that this virtue shall have place, not only in civil communication, but also in spiritual communication, and in our religious concerns and behavior, as is evident by what follows. Ver. 11, 12. "Let the women learn in silence, with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Not that I would hence infer that women's mouths should be shut up from Christian conversation; but all that I mean from it at this time is, that modesty, or shamefacedness, and reverence towards men, ought to have some place, even in our religious communication, one with another. The same is also evident by 1 Pet. iii. 15. "Be ready always to give an answer, to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." It is well if that very fear and shamefacedness, which the apostle recommends, has not sometimes been condemned, under the name of a *cursed fear* of *man*.

It is beautiful for persons when they are at prayer as the mouth of others, to make God only their fear and their dread, and to be wholly forgetful of men that are present, who let them be great or small, are nothing in the presence of the great God. And it is beautiful for a minister, when he speaks

ble stiff neckedness of the people, that they did not acknowledge the work of God, and were not convinced by all his wonders that they had seen: But human passion was mingled with his zeal. Psal. cvi. 32, 33. "They angered him also at the waters of strife; so that it went ill with Moses, for their sakes: Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips. Hear now ye rebels," says he, with bitterness of language.

Secondly, He behaved himself, and spake with an assuming air: He assumed too much to himself: *Hear now ye rebels, must WE fetch water out of this rock?* Spiritual pride wrought in Moses at that time: His temptations to it were very great, for he had great discoveries of God, and had been privileged with intimate and sweet communion with him, and God had made him the instrument of great good to his church; and though he was so humble a person, and, by God's own testimony, meek above all men upon the face of the whole earth, yet his temptations were too strong for him: Which surely should make our young ministers, that have of late been highly favored, and have had great success, exceeding careful, and distrustful of themselves. Alas! how far are we from having the strength of holy, meek, aged Moses! The temptation at this day is exceeding great to both those errors that Moses was guilty of; there is great temptation to bitterness and corrupt passion with zeal; for there is so much unreasonable opposition made against this glorious work of God, and so much stiffneckedness manifested in multitudes of this generation, notwithstanding all the great and wonderful works in which God has passed before them, that it greatly tends to provoke the spirits of such as have the interest of this work at heart, so as to move them to speak unadvisedly with their lips. And there is also great temptation to an assuming behavior in some persons: When a minister is greatly succeeded, from time to time, and so draws the eyes of the multitude upon him, and he sees himself flocked after, and resorted to as an oracle, and people are ready to adore him, and to offer sacrifice to him, as it was with Paul and Barnabas, at Lystra, it is almost impossible for a man to avoid taking upon him the airs

of a master, or some extraordinary person; a man had need to have a great stock of humility, and much divine assistance, to resist the temptation. But the greater our dangers are, the more ought to be our watchfulness and prayerfulness, and diffidence of ourselves, lest we bring ourselves into mischief.... Fishermen that have been very successful, and have caught a great many fish, had need to be careful that they do not at length begin to burn incense to their net. And we should take warning by Gideon, who, after God had highly favored and exalted him, and made him the instrument of working a wonderful deliverance for his people, at length made a god of the spoils of his enemies, which became a snare to him and to his house, so as to prove the ruin of his family.

All young ministers in this day of the bringing up the ark of God, should take warning by the example of a young Levite in Israel, viz. Uzza the son of Abinadab. He seemed to have a real concern for the ark of God, and to be zealous and engaged in his mind, on that joyful occasion of bringing up the ark, and God made him an instrument to bring the ark out of its long continued obscurity in Kirjathjearim, and he was succeeded to bring it a considerable way towards mount Zion; but for his want of humility, reverence and circumspection, and assuming to himself, or taking too much upon him, God broke forth upon him, and smote him for his error, so that he never lived to see, and partake of the great joy of his church, on occasion of the carrying up the ark into mount Zion, and the great blessings of heaven upon Israel, that were consequent upon it. Ministers that have been improved to carry on this work have been chiefly of the younger sort, who have doubtless, (as Uzza had) a real concern for the ark; and it is evident that they are much animated and engaged in their minds, (as he was) in this joyful day of bringing up the ark; and they are afraid what will become of the ark under the conduct of its ministers, (that are sometimes in scripture compared to oxen) they see the ark shakes, and they are afraid these blundering oxen will throw it; and some of them it is to be feared, have been over officious on this occasion, and have assumed too much to themselves, and have been bold to

put forth their hand to take hold of the ark, as though they were the only fit and worthy persons to defend it.

If young ministers had great humility, without a mixture, it would dispose them especially to treat aged ministers with respect and reverence, as their fathers, notwithstanding that a sovereign God may have given them greater assistance and success, than they have had. 1 Pet. v. 5. "Likewise ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder; yea, all of you, be subject one to another; and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." Lev. xix. 32. "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God; I am the Lord."

As spiritual pride disposes persons to assume much to themselves, so it also disposes them to treat others with neglect: On the contrary, pure Christian humility disposes persons to honor all men, agreeable to that rule, 1 Pet. ii. 17.

There has been in some, that I believe are true friends of religion, too much of an appearance of this fruit of spiritual pride, in their treatment of those that they looked upon to be carnal men; and particularly in refusing to enter into any discourse or reasoning with them. Indeed to spend a great deal of time in jangling and warm debates about religion, is not the way to propagate religion, but to hinder it; and some are so dreadfully set against this work, that it is a dismal task to dispute with them, all that one can say is utterly in vain, I have found it so by experience; and to go to enter into disputes about religion, at some times, is quite unseasonable, as particularly in meetings for religious conference, or exercises of worship. But yet we ought to be very careful that we do not refuse to discourse with men, with any appearance of a supercilious neglect, as though we counted them not worthy to be regarded; on the contrary we should condescend to carnal men, as Christ has condescended to us, to bear with our unteachableness and stupidity, and still to follow us with instructions, line upon line, and precept upon precept, saying, come let us reason together; setting light before us, and using all manner

of arguments with us, and waiting upon such dull scholars, as it were hoping that we should receive light. We should be ready with meekness and calmness, without hot disputing, to give our reasons, why we think this work is the work of God, to carnal men when they ask us, and not turn them by as not worthy to be talked with; as the apostle directed the primitive Christians to be ready to give a reason of the Christian faith and hope to the enemies of Christianity, 1 Pet. iii. 15. "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." And we ought not to condemn all reasoning about things of religion under the name of carnal reason. For my part, I desire no better than that those that oppose this work, should come fairly to submit to have the cause betwixt us tried by strict reasoning.

One qualification that the scripture speaks of once and again, as requisite in a minister is, that he should be διδακτικὸς apt to teach, 1 Tim. iii. 2. And the apostle seems to explain what he means by it, in 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. Or at least there expresses one thing he intends by it, viz. that a minister should be ready, meekly to condescend to, and instruct opposers. *And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth.*

Secondly, Another thing from whence errors in conduct, that attend such a revival of religion, do arise, is *wrong principles*.

And one erroneous principle, than which scarce any has proved more mischievous to the present glorious work of God, is a notion that it is God's manner, now in these days, to guide his saints, at least some that are more eminent, by inspiration, or immediate revelation, and to make known to them what shall come to pass hereafter, or what it is his will that they should do, by impressions that he by his Spirit makes upon their minds, either with, or without texts of scripture; whereby something is made known to them, that is not taught in the scripture as the words lie in the Bible. By such a no-

tion the devil has a great door opened for him; and if once this opinion should come to be fully yielded to, and established in the church of God, Satan would have opportunity thereby to set up himself as the guide and oracle of God's people, and to have his word regarded as their infallible rule, and so to lead them where he would, and to introduce what he pleased, and soon to bring the Bible into neglect and contempt. Late experience in some instances, has shown that the tendency of this notion is to cause persons to esteem the Bible as a book that is in a great measure useless.

This error will defend and support all errors. As long as a person has a notion that he is guided by immediate direction from Heaven, it makes him incorrigible and impregnable in all his misconduct: For what signifies it, for poor, blind worms of the dust, to go to argue with a man, and endeavor to convince him and correct him, that is guided by the immediate counsels and commands of the great Jehovah?

This great work of God has been exceedingly hindered by this error; and until we have quite taken this handle out of the devil's hands, the work of God will never go on without great clogs and hindrances. But Satan will always have a vast advantage in his hands against it, and as he has improved it hitherto, so he will do still: And it is evident that the devil knows the vast advantage he has by it, that makes him exceeding loth to let go his hold.

It is strange what a disposition there is in many well disposed and religious persons, to fall in with and hold fast this notion. It is enough to astonish one that such multiplied, plain instances of the failing of such supposed revelations, in the event, does not open every one's eyes. I have seen so many instances of the failing of such impressions, that would almost furnish an history: I have been acquainted with them when made under all kinds of circumstances, and have seen them fail in the event, when made with such circumstances as have been fairest and brightest, and most promising; as when they have been made upon the minds of such, as there was all reason to think were true saints, yea eminent saints, and at the very time when they have had great divine discov-

eries, and have been in the high exercise of true communion with God, and made with great strength, and with great sweetness accompanying, and I have had reason to think, with an excellent heavenly frame of spirit; yet continued, and made with texts of scripture, that seemed to be exceeding apposite, yea many texts following one another, extraordinarily and wonderfully brought to the mind, and with great power and majesty, and the impressions repeated over and over, after prayers to be directed; and yet all has most manifestly come to nothing, to the full conviction of the persons themselves. And God has in so many instances of late in his providence, covered such things with darkness, that one would think it should be enough quite to blank the expectations of such as have been ready to think highly of such things; it seems to be a testimony of God, that he has no design of reviving revelations in his church, and a rebuke from him to the groundless expectations of it.

It seems to me that scripture, Zec. xiii. 5, is a prophecy concerning ministers of the gospel, in the latter, and glorious day of the Christian church, which is evidently spoken of in this and the foregoing chapters: The words are, *I am no prophet; I am an husbandman: For man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.* The words, I apprehend, are to be interpreted in a spiritual sense; *I am an husbandman:* The work of ministers is very often in the New Testament, compared to the business of the husbandmen, that take care of God's husbandry, to whom he lets out his vineyard, and sends them forth to labor in his field, where one plants and another waters, one sows and another reaps; so ministers are called laborers in God's harvest. And as it is added, *Man taught me to keep cattle from my youth:* So the work of a minister is very often in scripture represented by the business of a shepherd or pastor. And whereas it is said, *I am no prophet; but man taught me from my youth.* It is as much as to say, I do not pretend to have received my skill, whereby I am fitted for the business of a pastor or shepherd in the church of God, by immediate inspiration, but by education, by being trained up to

the business by human learning, and instructions I have received from my youth or childhood, by ordinary means.

And why cannot we be contented with the divine oracles, that holy pure word of God, that we have in such abundance, and such clearness, now since the canon of scripture is completed? Why should we desire to have any thing added to them by impulses from above? Why should not we rest in that standing rule that God has given to his church, which the apostle teaches us is surer than a voice from heaven? And why should we desire to make the scripture speak more to us than it does? Or why should any desire any higher kind of intercourse with heaven, than that which is by having the Holy Spirit given in his sanctifying influences, infusing and exciting grace and holiness, love and joy, which is the highest kind of intercourse that the saints and angels in heaven have with God, and the chief excellency of the glorified man Christ Jesus?

Some that follow impulses and impressions go away with a notion that they do no other than follow the guidance of God's word, and make the scripture their rule, because the impression is made with a text of scripture, that comes to their mind, though they take that text as it is impressed on their minds, and improve it as a new revelation, to all intents and purposes, or as the revelation of a particular thing, that is now newly made, while the text in itself, as it is in the Bible, implies no such thing, and they themselves do not suppose that any such revelation was contained in it before. As for instance, suppose that text should come into a person's mind with strong impression, Acts ix. 6. "Arise and go into the city; and it shall be told thee what thou must do." And he should interpret it as an immediate signification of the will of God, that he should now, forthwith go to such a neighbor town, and as a revelation of that future event, viz. That there he should meet with a further discovery of his duty. If such things as these are revealed by the impression of these words, it is to all intents, a new revelation, not the less because certain words of scripture are made use of in the case: Here are propositions or truths entirely new, that are

supposed now to be revealed, that those words do not contain in themselves, and that till now there was no revelation of any where to be found in heaven or earth. These propositions, That it is God's mind and will that such a person by name, should arise at such a time, and go from such a place to such a place, and that there he should meet with discoveries, are entirely new propositions, wholly different from the propositions contained in that text of scripture, no more contained, or consequentially implied in the words themselves, without a new revelation, than it is implied that he should arise and go to any other place, or that any other person should arise and go to that place. The propositions supposed to be now revealed, are as really different from those contained in that scripture, as they are from the propositions contained in that text, Gen. v. 6. "And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos."

This is quite a different thing from the Spirit's enlightening the mind to understand the precepts or propositions of the word of God, and know what is contained and revealed in them, and what consequences may justly be drawn from them, and to see how they are applicable to our case and circumstances; which is done without any new revelation, only by enabling the mind to understand and apply a revelation already made.

Those texts of scripture that speak of the children of God as *led by the Spirit*, have been by some, brought to defend a being guided by such impulses; as particularly, those Rom. viii. 14. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." And Gal. v. 18. "But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law." But these texts themselves confute them that bring them; for it is evident that the leading of the Spirit that the apostle speaks of is a gracious leading, or what is peculiar to the children of God, and that natural men cannot have; for he speaks of it as a sure evidence of their being the sons of God, and not under the law: But a leading or directing a person, by immediately revealing to him where he should go, or what shall hereafter come to pass, or what shall be the future consequence of his doing

thus or thus, if there be any such thing in these days, is not of the nature of the gracious leading of the Spirit of God, that is peculiar to God's children; it is no more than a common gift; there is nothing in it but what natural men are capable of, and many of them have had in the days of inspiration: A man may have ten thousand such revelations and directions from the Spirit of God, and yet not have a jot of grace in his heart: It is no more than the gift of prophecy, which immediately reveals what will be, or should be hereafter; but this is but a common gift, as the apostle expressly shews, 1 Cor. xiii.2, 8. If a person has any thing revealed to him from God, or is directed to any thing, by a voice from heaven, or a whisper, or words immediately suggested and put into his mind, there is nothing of the nature of grace, merely in this; it is of the nature of a common influence of the Spirit, and is but dross and dung, in comparison of the excellency of that gracious leading of the Spirit that the saints have. Such a way of being directed where one shall go, and what he shall do, is no more than what Balaam had from God, who from time to time revealed to him what he should do, and when he had done one thing, then directed him what he should do next; so that he was in this sense led by the Spirit, for a considerable time. There is a more excellent way that the Spirit of God leads the sons of God, that natural men cannot have, and that is, by inclining them to do the will of God, and go in the shining path of truth and Christian holiness, from an holy, heavenly disposition, which the Spirit of God gives them, and enlivens in them, which inclines them, and leads them to those things that are excellent, and agreeable to God's mind, whereby they *are transformed, by the renewing of their minds, and prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God*, as in Rom. xii. 2. And so the Spirit of God does in a gracious manner teach the saints their duty; and teaches them in an higher manner than ever Balaam, or Saul, or Judas were taught, or any natural man is capable of while such. The Spirit of God enlightens them with respect to their duty, by making their eye single and pure, whereby the whole body is full of light. The sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God

rectifies the taste of the soul, whereby it savors those things that are of God, and naturally relishes and delights in those things that are holy and agreeable to God's mind, and like one of a distinguishing taste, chooses those things that are good and wholesome, and rejects those things that are evil; for the sanctified ear tries words, and the sanctified heart tries actions, as the mouth tastes meat. And thus the Spirit of God leads and guides the meek in his way, agreeably to his promises; he enables them to understand the commands and counsels of his word, and rightly to apply them. Christ blames the Pharisees that they had not this holy distinguishing taste, to discern and distinguish what was right and wrong. Luke xii. 57. "Yea, and why, even of your own selves, judge ye not what is right?

The leading of the Spirit which God gives his children, which is peculiar to them, is that teaching them his statutes, and causing them to understand the way of his precepts, which the Psalmist so very often prays for, especially in the 119th Psalm; and not in giving of them *new statutes* and *new precepts*: He graciously gives them eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to understand; he causes them to understand the fear of the Lord, and so brings the blind by a way they knew not, and leads them in paths that they had not known, and makes darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.

So the assistance of the Spirit in praying and preaching seems by some to have been greatly misunderstood, and they have sought after a miraculous assistance of inspiration, by immediate suggesting of words to them, by such gifts and influences of the Spirit, in praying and teaching, as the apostle speaks of, 1 Cor. xiv. 14, 26, (which many natural men had in those days) instead of a gracious holy assistance of the Spirit of God, which is the far more excellent way; (as 1 Cor. xii. 31, and xiii. 1.) The gracious, and most excellent kind of assistance of the Spirit of God in praying and preaching, is not by immediate suggesting of words to the apprehension, which may be with a cold dead heart, but by warming the heart, and filling it with a great sense of those things that are

to be spoken of, and with holy affections, that that sense and those affections may suggest words. Thus indeed the Spirit of God may be said, indirectly and mediately to suggest words to us, to indite our petitions for us, and to teach the preacher what to say; he fills the heart, and that fills the mouth; as we know that when men are greatly affected in any matter, and their hearts are very full, it fills them with matter for speech, and makes them eloquent upon that subject; and much more have spiritual affections this tendency, for many reasons that might be given. When a person is in an holy and lively frame in secret prayer, it will wonderfully supply him with matter, and with expressions as every true Christian knows; and so it will fill his mouth in Christian conversation, and it has the like tendency to enable a person in public prayer and preaching. And if he has these holy influences of the Spirit on his heart in an high degree, nothing in the world will have so great a tendency to make both the matter and manner of his public performances excellent and profitable. But since there is no immediate suggesting of words from the Spirit of God to be expected or desired, they who neglect and despise study and premeditation, in order to a preparation for the pulpit, in such an expectation, are guilty of presumption; though doubtless it may be lawful for some persons, in some cases, (and they may be called to it) to preach with very little study; and the Spirit of God, by the heavenly frame of heart that he gives them, may enable them to do it to excellent purpose.

Besides this most excellent way of the Spirit of God his assisting ministers in public performances, which (considered as the preacher's privilege) far excels inspiration, there is a common assistance which natural men may have in these days, and which the godly may have intermingled with a gracious assistance, which is also very different from inspiration, and that is his assisting natural principles; as his assisting the natural apprehension, reason, memory, conscience, and natural affection.

But to return to the head of impressions and immediate revelations; many lay themselves open to a delusion by ex-

pecting direction from Heaven in this way, and waiting for it; In such a case it is easy for persons to imagine that they have it. They are perhaps at a loss concerning something, undetermined what they shall do, or what course they should take in some affair, and they pray to God to direct them, and make known to them his mind and will; and then instead of expecting to be directed, by being assisted in consideration of the rules of God's word, and their circumstances, and God's providence, and enabled to look on things in a true light, and justly to weigh them, they are waiting for some secret immediate influence on their minds, unaccountably swaying their minds, and turning their thoughts or inclinations that way that God would have them go, and are observing their own minds, to see what arises there, whether some texts of scripture do not come into the mind, or whether some ideas or inward motions and dispositions do not arise in something of an unaccountable manner, that they may call a divine direction. Hereby they are exposed to two things,

First, They lay themselves open to the devil, and give him a fair opportunity to lead them where he pleases; for they stand ready to follow the first extraordinary impulse that they shall have, groundlessly concluding it is from God.

And *Secondly*, They are greatly exposed to be deceived by their own imaginations; for such an expectation awakens and quickens the imagination; and that oftentimes is called an uncommon impression, that is no such thing; and they ascribe that to the agency of some invisible being, that is owing only to themselves.

Again, another way, that many have been deceived, is, by drawing false conclusions from true premises. Many true and eminent saints have been led into mistakes and snares, by arguing too much from that, that they have prayed in faith; and that oftentimes when the premises are true, they have indeed been greatly assisted in prayer for such a particular mercy, and have had the true spirit of prayer in exercise in their asking it of God; but they have concluded more from these premises than is a just consequence from them: That they have thus prayed is a sure sign that their prayer is accepted

and heard, and that God will give a gracious answer, according to his own wisdom, and that the particular thing that was asked shall be given, or that which is equivalent; this is a just consequence from it; but it is not inferred by any new revelation now made, but by the revelation that is made in God's word, the promises made to the prayer of faith, in the holy scriptures: But that God will answer them in that individual thing that they ask, if it be not a thing promised in God's word, or they do not certainly know that it is that which will be most for the good of God's church, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom and glory, nor whether it will be best for them, is more than can be justly concluded from it. If God remarkably meets with one of his children while he is praying for a particular mercy of great importance, for himself, or some other person, or any society of men, and does by the influences of his Spirit greatly humble him, and empty him of himself in his prayer, and manifests himself remarkably in his excellency, sovereignty and his allsufficient power and grace in Jesus Christ, and does in a remarkable manner enable the person to come to him for that mercy, poor in spirit, and with humble resignation to God, and with a great degree of faith in the divine sufficiency, and the sufficiency of Christ's mediation, that person has indeed a great deal the more reason to hope that God will grant that mercy, than otherwise he would have; the greater probability is justly inferred from that, agreeably to the promises of the holy scripture, that the prayer is accepted and heard; and it is much more probable that a prayer that is heard will be returned with the particular mercy that is asked, than one that is not heard. And there is no reason at all to doubt, but that God does some times especially enable to the exercises of faith, when the minds of his saints are engaged in thoughts of, and prayer for some particular blessing they greatly desire; i. e. God is pleased especially to give them a believing frame, a sense of his fulness, and a spirit of humble dependence on him, at such times as when they are thinking of, and praying for that mercy, more than for other mercies; he gives them a particular sense of his ability to do that thing, and of the sufficiency of

his power to overcome such and such obstacles, and the sufficiency of his mercy, and of the blood of Christ for the removal of the guilt that is in the way of the bestowment of such a mercy, in particular. When this is the case, it makes the probability still much greater, that God intends to bestow the particular mercy sought, in his own time, and his own way.... But here is nothing of the nature of a revelation in the case, but only a drawing rational conclusions from the particular manner and circumstances of the ordinary gracious influences of God's Spirit. And as God is pleased sometimes to give his saints particular exercises of faith in his sufficiency, with regard to particular mercies they seek, so he is sometimes pleased to make use of his word in order to it, and helps the actings of faith with respect to such a mercy, by texts of scripture that do especially exhibit the sufficiency of God's power or mercy, in such a like case, or speak of such a manner of the exercise of God's strength and grace. The strengthening of their faith in God's sufficiency in this case, is therefore a just improvement of such scriptures; it is no more than what those scriptures, as they stand in the Bible, do hold forth just cause for. But to take them as new whispers or revelations from heaven, is not making a just improvement of them. If persons have thus a spirit of prayer remarkably given them, concerning a particular mercy, from time to time, so as evidently to be assisted to act faith in God, in that particular, in a very distinguishing manner, the argument in some cases, may be very strong that God does design to grant that mercy, not from any revelation now made of it, but from such a kind and manner of the ordinary influence of his Spirit, with respect to that thing.

But here a great deal of caution and circumspection must be used in drawing inferences of this nature: There are many ways persons may be misled and deluded. The ground on which some expect that they shall receive the thing they have asked for, is rather a strong imagination, than any true humble faith in the divine sufficiency. They have a strong persuasion that the thing asked shall be granted, (which they can give no reason for) without any remarkable discovery of that

glory and fullness of God and Christ, that is the ground of faith. And sometimes the confidence that persons have that their prayers shall be answered, is only a selfrighteous confidence, and no true faith: They have a high conceit of themselves as eminent saints, and special favorites of God, and have also a high conceit of the prayers they have made, because they were much enlarged and affected in them; and hence they are positive in it that the thing will come to pass. And sometimes when once they have conceived such a notion, they grow stronger and stronger in it; and this they think is from an immediate divine hand upon their minds to strengthen their confidence; whereas it is only by their dwelling in their minds on their own excellency, and high experiences, and great assistances, whereby they look brighter and brighter in their own eyes. Hence it is sound observation and experience, that nothing in the world exposes so much to enthusiasm as spiritual pride and selfrighteousness.

In order to drawing a just inference from the supposed assistance we have had in prayer for a particular mercy, and judging of the probability of the bestowment of that individual mercy, many things must be considered. We must consider the importance of the mercy sought, and the principle whence we so earnestly desire it; how far it is good, and agreeable to the mind and will of God; the degree of love to God that we exercised in our prayer; the degree of discovery that is made of the divine sufficiency, and the degree in which our assistance is manifestly distinguishing with respect to that mercy. And there is nothing of greater importance in the argument than the degree of humility, poverty of spirit, selfemptiness and resignation to the holy will of God, which God gives us the exercise of in our seeking that mercy: Praying for a particular mercy with much of these things, I have often seen blessed with a remarkable bestowment of the particular thing asked for.

From what has been said, we may see which way God may, only by the ordinary gracious influences of his Spirit, sometimes gives his saints special reason to hope for the bestowment of a particular mercy they desire and have prayed for,

and which we may suppose he oftentimes gives eminent saints, that have great degrees of humility, and much communion with God. And here, I humbly conceive, some eminent servants of Jesus Christ that have appeared in the church of God, that we read of in ecclesiastical story, have been led into a mistake; and through want of distinguishing such things as these from immediate revelations, have thought that God has favored them, in some instances, with the same kind of divine influences that the apostles and prophets had of old.

Another erroneous principle that some have embraced, that has been a source of many errors in their conduct, is, that persons ought always to do whatsoever the Spirit of God (though but indirectly) inclines them to. Indeed the Spirit of God in itself is infinitely perfect, and all his immediate actings, simply considered, are perfect, and there can be nothing wrong in them; and therefore all that the Spirit of God inclines us to directly and immediately, without the intervention of any other cause that shall pervert and misimprove what is from the Spirit of God, ought to be done; but there may be many things that we may be disposed to do, which disposition may indirectly be from the Spirit of God, that we ought not to do: The disposition in general may be good, and be from the Spirit of God, but the particular determination of that disposition, as to particular actions, objects and circumstances, may be ill, and not from the Spirit of God, but may be from the intervention or interposition of some infirmity, blindness, inadvertence, deceit or corruption of ours; so that although the disposition in general ought to be allowed and promoted, and all those actings of it that are simply from God's Spirit, yet the particular ill direction or determination of that disposition, which is from some other cause, ought not to be followed.

As for instance, the Spirit of God may cause a person to have a dear love to another, and so a great desire of, and delight in his comfort, ease and pleasure: This disposition in general is good, and ought to be followed; but yet through the intervention of indiscretion, or some other bad cause, it may be ill directed, and have a bad determination, as to par-

ticular acts; and the person indirectly, through that real love that he has to his neighbor, may kill him with kindness; he may do that out of sincere good will to him, that may tend to ruin him. A good disposition may, through some inadvertence or delusion, strongly incline a person to that, which if he saw all things as they are, would be most contrary to that disposition. The true loyalty of a general, and his zeal for the honor of his prince, may exceedingly animate him in war; but yet this that is a good disposition, through indiscretion and mistake, may push him forward to those things that give the enemy great advantage, and may expose him and his army to ruin, and may tend to the ruin of his master's interest.

The apostle does evidently suppose that the Spirit of God in his extraordinary, immediate and miraculous influences on men's minds, may in some respect excite inclinations in men, that if gratified, would tend to confusion, and therefore must sometimes be restrained, and in their exercise, must be under the government of discretion. 1 Cor. xiv. 31, 32, 33. "For ye may all prophecy, one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets; for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." Here by *the spirits of the prophets*, according to the known phraseology of the apostle, is meant the Spirit of God acting in the prophets, according to those special gifts, with which each one was endowed. And here it is plainly implied that the Spirit of God, thus operating in them, may be an occasion of their having, sometimes an inclination to do that, in the exercise of those gifts, which it was not proper, decent or profitable that they should; and that therefore the inclination, though indirectly from the Spirit of God, should be restrained, and that it ought to be subject to the discretion of the prophets, as to the particular time and circumstance of its exercise.

I can make no doubt but that it is possible for a minister to have given him by the Spirit of God, such a sense of the importance of eternal things, and of the misery of mankind, that are so many of them exposed to eternal destruction, together

with such a love to souls, that he might find in himself a disposition to spend all his time, day and night, in warning, exhorting and calling upon men, and so that he must be obliged as it were to do violence to himself ever to refrain, so as to give himself any opportunity to eat, drink or sleep. And so I believe there may be a disposition in like manner, indirectly excited in lay persons, through the intervention of their infirmity, to do what belongs to ministers only. Yea, to do those things that would not become either ministers or people: Through the influence of the Spirit of God, together with want of discretion, and some remaining corruption, women and children might feel themselves inclined to break forth and scream aloud, to great congregations, warning and exhorting the whole multitude, and to go forth and hallow and scream in the streets, or to leave the families they belong to, and go from house to house, earnestly exhorting others; but yet it would by no means follow that it was their duty to do these things, or that they would not have a tendency to do ten times as much hurt as good.

Another wrong principle from whence have arisen errors in conduct, is, that whatsoever is found to be of present and immediate benefit, may and ought to be practised, without looking forward to future consequences. Some persons seem to think that it sufficiently justifies any thing that they say or do, that it is found to be for their present edification, and the edification of those that are with them; it assists and promotes their present affection, and therefore they think they should not concern themselves about future consequences, but leave them with God. Indeed in things that are in themselves our duty, being required by moral rules, or absolute positive commands of God, they must be done, and future consequences must be left with God; our election and discretion takes no place here: But in other things we are to be governed by discretion, and must not only look at the present good, but our view must be extensive, and we must look at the consequences of things. It is the duty of ministers especially to exercise this discretion: In things wherein they are not determined by an absolute rule, and that are not enjoined them

by a wisdom superior to their own, Christ has left them to their own discretion, with that general rule, that they should exercise the utmost wisdom they can obtain, in pursuing that, which upon the best view of the consequences of things they can get, will tend most to the advancement of his kingdom. This is implied in those words of Christ to his disciples, when he sent them forth to preach the gospel, Mat. x. 16. "Be ye wise as serpents." The scripture always represents the work of a gospel minister by those employments that do especially require a wise foresight of, and provision for, future events and consequences. So it is compared to the business of a steward, that is a business that in an eminent manner requires forecast, and a wise laying in of provision, for the supply of the needs of the family, according to its future necessities; and a good minister is called a wise steward: So it is compared to the business of an husbandman, that almost wholly consists in those things that are done with a view to the future fruits and consequences of his labor: The husbandman's discretion and forecast is eloquently set forth in Isa. xxviii. 24, 25, 26. "Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? Doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat, and the appointed barley, and the rye, in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him." So the work of the ministry is compared to that of a wise builder or architect, who has a long reach, and comprehensive view; and for whom it is necessary, that when he begins a building, he should have at once a view of the whole frame, and all the future parts of the structure, even to the pinnacle, that all may fitly be framed together. So also it is compared to the business of a trader or merchant, who is to gain by trading with the money that he begins with: This also is a business that exceedingly requires forecast, and without it, is never like to be followed with any success, for any long time: So it is represented by the business of a fisherman, which depends on craft and subtilty: It is also compared to the business of a soldier that goes to war, which is a business that perhaps,

above any other secular business, requires great foresight, and a wise provision for future events and consequences.

And particularly ministers ought not to be careless how much they discompose and ruffle the minds of those that they esteem natural men, or how great an uproar they raise in the carnal world, and so lay blocks in the way of the propagation of religion. This certainly is not to follow the example of that zealous Apostle Paul, who, though he would not depart from his enjoined duty to please carnal men, yet wherein he might with a good conscience, did exceedingly lay out himself to please them, and if possible to avoid raising in the multitude, prejudices, oppositions and tumults against the gospel; and looked upon it that it was of great consequence that it should be, if possible, avoided. 1 Cor. x. 32, 33. "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men, in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." Yea, he declares that he laid himself out so much for this, that he made himself a kind of a servant to all sorts of men, conforming to their customs and various humors, in every thing wherein he might, even in things that were very burdensome to him, that he might not fright men away from Christianity, and cause them to stand as it were braced and armed against it, but on the contrary, if possible, might with condescension and friendship win and draw them to it; as you may see, 1 Cor. ix. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. And agreeably hereto, are the directions he gives to others, both ministers and people: So he directs the Christian *Romans, not to please themselves, but every one please his neighbor, for his good, to edification*, Rom. xv. 1, 2. *And to follow after the things that make for peace*, chap. xiv. 19. And he presses it in terms exceeding strong, Rom. xii. 18. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." And he directs ministers to endeavor if possible to gain opposers by a meek condescending treatment, avoiding all appearance of strife or fierceness, 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25, 26. To the like purpose the same apostle directs Christians to *walk in wisdom, towards them that are without*, Eph. iv. 5. And to avoid giving offence to others, if we can, *that our*

good may not be evil spoken of, Rom. xiv. 16. So that it is evident that the great and most zealous and most successful propagator of vital religion that ever was, looked upon it to be of great consequence to endeavor, as much as possible, by all the methods of lawful meekness and gentleness, to avoid raising the prejudice and opposition of the world against religion. When we have done our utmost there will be opposition enough against vital religion, against which the carnal mind of man has such an enmity; we should not therefore, needlessly increase and raise that enmity) as in the apostles' days, though he took so much pains to please men, yet because he was faithful and thorough in his work, persecution almost every where was raised against him.

A fisherman is careful not needlessly to ruffle and disturb the water, least he should drive the fish away from his net; but he will rather endeavor if possible to draw them into it. Such a fisherman was the apostle. 2 Cor. xii. 15, 16. "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. But be it so, I did not burden you, nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile."

The necessity of suffering persecution, in order to being a a true Christian, has undoubtedly by some been carried to an extreme, and the doctrine has been abused. It has been looked upon necessary to uphold a man's credit amongst others as a Christian, that he should be persecuted. I have heard it made an objection against the sincerity of particular persons, that they were no more hated and reproached. And the manner of glorying in persecution, or the cross of Christ, has in some been very wrong, so as has had too much of an appearance of lifting up themselves in it, that they were very much hated and reviled, more than most, as an evidence of their excelling others, in being good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Such an improvement of the doctrine of the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, and of the necessity of persecution, becoming credible and customary, has a direct tendency to cause those that would be accounted true Christians, to behave themselves so towards those that

are not well affected to religion, as to provoke their hatred, or at least to be but little careful to avoid it, and not very studiously and earnestly to strive, (after the apostle's example and precepts) to please them to their edification, and by meekness and gentleness to win them, and by all possible means to live peaceably with them.

I believe that saying of our Saviour, *I came not to send peace on earth, but division*, has been abused; as though when we see great strife and division arise about religion, and violent heats of spirit against the truly pious, and a loud clamor and uproar against the work of God, it was to be rejoiced in, because it is that which Christ came to send. It has almost been laid down as a maxim by some, that the more division and strife, the better sign; which naturally leads persons to seek it and provoke it, or leads them to, and encourages them in, such a manner of behavior, such a roughness and sharpness, or such an affected neglect, as has a natural tendency to raise prejudice and opposition; instead of striving, as the apostle did to his utmost, by all meekness, gentleness, and benevolence of behavior, to prevent or assuage it. Christ came to send a sword on earth, and to cause division, no otherwise than he came to send damnation; for Christ that is set for the glorious restoration of some, is set for the fall of others, and to be a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to them, and an occasion of their vastly more aggravated and terrible damnation; and this is always the consequence of a great outpouring of the Spirit and revival of vital religion, it is the means of the salvation of some, and the more aggravated damnation of others. But certainly this is no just argument that men's exposedness to damnation is not be lamented, or that we should not exert ourselves to our utmost, in all the methods that we can devise, that others might be saved, and to avoid all such behavior towards them as tends to lead them down to hell.

I know there is naturally a great enmity in the heart of man against vital religion; and I believe there would have been a great deal of opposition against this glorious work of God in Newengland if the subjects and promoters of it had behaved themselves never so agreeably to Christian rules; and I be-

in height, without taking care withal proportionably to enlarge the bottom; whereby the whole is in danger of coming to the ground; or they are for putting on the cupola and pinnacle before they are come to it, or before the lower parts of the building are done; which tends at once to put a stop to the building, and hinder its ever being a complete structure. Many that are thus imprudent and hasty with their zeal, have a real eager appetite for that which is good; but are like children, that are impatient to wait for the fruit until the proper season of it, and therefore snatch it before it is ripe: Oftentimes in their haste they overshoot their mark, and frustrate their own end; they put that which they would obtain further out of reach than it was before, and establish and confirm that which they would remove. Things must have time to ripen: The prudent husbandman waits until he has received the former and the latter rain, and till the harvest is ripe, before he reaps. We are now just as it were beginning to recover out of a dreadful disease that we have been long under; and to feed a man recovering from a fever with strong meat at once, is the ready way to kill him. The reformation from Popery was much hindered by this hasty zeal: Many were for immediately rectifying all disorders by force, which were condemned by Luther, and were a great trouble to him. See Sleiden's History of the Reformation, page 52, &c. and book v, throughout. It is a vain prejudice that some have lately imbibed against such rules of prudence and moderation: They will be forced to come to them at last; they will find themselves that they are not able to maintain their cause without them; and if they will not hearken before, experience will convince them at last, when it will be too late for them to rectify their mistake.

Another error, that is of the nature of an erroneous principle, that some have gone upon, is a wrong notion that they have of an attestation of divine providence to persons or things. We go too far when we look upon the success that God gives to some persons, in making them the instruments of doing much good, as a testimony of God's approbation of those persons and all the courses they take. It is a main ar-

gument that has been made use of to defend the conduct of some of those ministers, that have been blamed as imprudent and irregular, that God has smiled upon them and blessed them, and given them great success, and that however men charge them as guilty of many wrong things, yet it is evident that God is with them, and then who can be against them? And probably some of those ministers themselves, by this very means, have had their ears stopped against all that has been said to convince them of their misconduct. But there are innumerable ways that persons may be misled, in forming a judgment of the mind and will of God, from the events of Providence. If a person's success be a reward of something that God sees in him, that he approves of, yet it is no argument that he approves of every thing in him. Who can tell how far the divine grace may go in greatly rewarding some small good that he sees in a person, a good meaning, something good in his disposition, while he at the same time, in sovereign mercy, hides his eyes from a great deal that is bad, that it is his pleasure to forgive, and not to mark against the person, though in itself it be very ill? God has not told us after what manner he will proceed in this matter, and we go upon most uncertain grounds when we undertake to determine. It is an exceeding difficult thing to know how far love or hatred are exercised towards persons or actions, by all that is before us. God was pleased in his sovereignty to give such success to Jacob in that, which from beginning to end, was a deceitful, lying contrivance and proceeding of his, that in that way, he obtained that blessing that was worth infinitely more than the fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven, that was given to Esau, in his blessing, yea worth more than all that the world can afford. God was for a while with Judas, so that he by God's power accompanying him, wrought miracles and cast out devils; but this could not justly be interpreted as God's approbation of his person, or his thievery, that he lived in at the same time.

The dispensations and events of Providence, with their reasons, are too little understood by us, to be improved by us as our rule, instead of God's word; *God has his way in the sea,*

and his path in the mighty waters, and his footsteps are not known, and he gives us no account of any of his matters ; and therefore we cannot safely take the events of his providence as a revelation of his mind concerning a person's conduct and behavior, we have no warrant so to do, God has never appointed those things, but something else to be our rule ; we have but one rule to go by, and that is his holy word, and when we join any thing else with it as having the force of a rule, we are guilty of that which is strictly forbidden, Deut. iv. 2. Prov. xxx. 6, and Rev. xxii. 18. They who make what they imagine is pointed forth to them in Providence, their rule of behavior, do err, as well as those that follow impulses and impressions : We should put nothing in the room of the word of God. It is to be feared that some have been greatly confirmed and emboldened by the great success that God has given them, in some things that have really been contrary to the rules of God's holy word. If it has been so, they have been guilty of presumption, and abusing God's kindness to them, and the great honor he has put upon them : They have seen that God was with them, and made them victorious in their preaching ; and this it is to be feared has been abused by some to a degree of self confidence ; it has much taken off all jealousy of themselves ; they have been bold therefore to go great lengths, in a presumption that God was with them, and would defend them, and finally baffle all that found fault with them.

Indeed there is a voice of God in his Providence, that may be interpreted and well understood by the rule of his word ; and Providence may to our dark minds and weak faith, confirm the word of God, as it fulfils it But to improve divine Providence thus, is quite a different thing from making a rule of Providence. There is a good use may be made of the events of Providence, of our own observation and experience, and human histories, and the opinion of the fathers and other eminent men ; but finally all must be brought to *one rule*, viz. the word of God, and that must be regarded as our *only rule*.

Nor do I think that they go upon sure ground, that conclude that they have not been in an error in their conduct, be-

cause that at the time of their doing a thing, for which they have been blamed and reproached by others, they were favored with special comforts of God's Spirit. God's bestowing special spiritual mercies on a person at such a time, is no sign that he approves of every thing that he sees in him at that time. David had very much of the presence of God while he lived in polygamy: And Solomon had some very high favors, and peculiar smiles of Heaven, and particularly at the dedication of the temple, while he greatly multiplied wives to himself, and horses, and silver and gold; all contrary to the most express command of God to the king, in the law of Moses, Deut. xvii. 16, 17. We cannot tell how far God may hide his eyes from beholding iniquity in Jacob, and seeing perverseness in Israel. We cannot tell what are the reasons of God's actions any further than he interprets for himself. God sometimes gave some of the primitive Christians, the extraordinary influence of his spirit, when they were out of the way of their duty; and continued it, while they were abusing it; as is plainly implied, 1 Cor. xiv. 31, 32, 33.

Yea, if a person has done a thing for which he is reproached, and that reproach be an occasion of his feeling sweet exercises of grace in his soul, and that from time to time, I do not think that is a certain evidence that God approves of the thing he is blamed for. For undoubtedly a mistake may be the occasion of stirring up the exercise of grace, in a man that has grace. If a person, through mistake, thinks he has received some particular great mercy, that mistake may be the occasion of stirring up the sweet exercises of love to God, and true thankfulness and joy in God. As for instance, if one that is full of love to God should hear credible tidings, concerning a remarkable deliverance of a child, or other dear friend, or of some glorious thing done for the city of God, no wonder if, on such an occasion, the sweet actings of love to God, and delight in God should be excited, though indeed afterwards it should prove a false report that he heard. So if one that loves God, is much maligned and reproached for doing that which he thinks God required and approves, no wonder that it is sweet to such an one to think that God is his

friend, though men are his enemies; no wonder at all, that this is an occasion of his, as it were, leaving the world, and sweetly betaking himself to God, as his sure friend, and finding sweet complacence in God; though he be indeed in a mistake, concerning that which he thought was agreeable to God's will.

As I have before shewn that the exercise of a truly good affection, may be the occasion of error, and may indirectly incline a person to do that which is wrong; so on the other hand, error, or a doing that which is wrong, may be an occasion of the exercise of a truly good affection. The reason of it is this, that however all exercises of grace be from the Spirit of God, yet the Spirit of God dwells and acts in the hearts of the saints, in some measure after the manner of a vital, natural principle, a principle of new nature in them; whose exercises are excited by means, in some measure as other natural principles are. Though grace be not in the saints, as a *mere natural principle*, but as a sovereign agent, and so its exercises are not *tied to means*, by an immutable law of nature, as in mere natural principles; yet God has so constituted that grace should dwell so in the hearts of the saints, that its exercises should have some degree of connexion with means, after the manner of a principle of nature.

Another erroneous principle that there has been something of, and that has been an occasion of some mischief and confusion, is that external order in matters of religion, and use of the means of grace, is but little to be regarded: It is spoken lightly of, under the names of ceremonies and dead forms, &c. And is probably the more despised by some because their opposers insist so much upon it, and because they are so continually hearing from them the cry of *disorder and confusion*..... It is objected against the importance of external order that God does not look at the outward form, he looks at the heart: But that is a weak argument against its importance, that true Godliness does not consist in it; for it may be equally made use of against all the outward means of grace whatsoever.... True Godliness does not consist in ink and paper, but yet that would be a foolish objection against the importance of ink

and paper in religion, when without it we could not have the word of God. If any external means at all are needful, any outward actions of a public nature, or wherein God's people are jointly concerned in public society, without doubt external order is needful: The management of an external affair that is public, or wherein a multitude is concerned without order, is in every thing found impossible. Without order there can be no general direction of a multitude to any particular designed end, their purposes will cross one another, and they will not help but hinder one another. A multitude cannot act in union one with another without order; confusion separates and divides them, so that there can be no concert or agreement. If a multitude would help one another in any affair, they must unite themselves one to another in a regular subordination of members, in some measure as it is in the natural body; by this means they will be in some capacity to act with united strength: And thus Christ has appointed that it should be in the visible church, as 1 Cor. xii. 14, to the end, and Rom. xii. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Zeal without order will do but little, or at least it will be effectual but a little while. Let a company that are very zealous against the enemy, go forth to war, without any manner of order, every one rushing forward as his zeal shall drive him, all in confusion, if they gain something at first onset, by surprising the enemy, yet how soon do they come to nothing, and fall an easy, helpless prey to their adversaries? Order is one of the most necessary of all external means of the spiritual good of God's church; and therefore it is requisite, even in heaven itself, where there is the least need of any external means of grace; order is maintained amongst the glorious angels there. And the necessity of it in order to the carrying on any design, wherein a multitude are concerned, is so great, that even the devils in hell are driven to something of it, that they may carry on the designs of their kingdom. And it is very observable, that those kinds of irrational creatures, for whom it is needful that they should act in union and join a multitude together, to carry on any work for their preservation, they do by a wonderful instinct that God has put into them, observe and maintain a most reg-

ular and exact order among themselves; such as bees and some others. And order in the visible church is not only necessary to the carrying on the designs of Christ's glory and the church's prosperity, but it is absolutely necessary to its defence; without it, it is like a city without walls, and can be in no capacity to defend itself from any kind of mischief: And so however it be an external thing, yet is not to be despised on that account; for though it be not the food of souls, yet it is in some respect their defence. The people of Holland would be very foolish to despise the dikes that keep out the sea from overwhelming them, under the names of dead stones and vile earth, because the matter of which they are built is not good to eat.

It seems to be partly on the foundation of this notion of the worthlessness of external order, that some have seemed to act on that principle, that the power of judging and openly censuring others should not be reserved in the hands of particular persons, or consistories appointed thereto, but ought to be left at large, for any body that pleases to take it upon them, or that think themselves fit for it: But more of this afterwards.

On this foundation also, an orderly attending on the stated worship of God in families, has been made too light of; and it has been in some places too much of a common and customary thing to be absent from family worship, and to be abroad late in the night at religious meetings, or to attend religious conversation. Not but that this may be, on certain extraordinary occasions; I have seen the case to be such in many instances, that I have thought did afford sufficient warrant for persons to be absent from family prayer, and to be from home until very late in the night: But we should take heed that this does not become a custom or common practice, if it should be so, we shall soon find the consequences to be very ill.

It seems to be on the same foundation, of the supposed unprofitableness of external order, that it has been thought by some, that there is no need that such and such religious services and performances should be limited to any certain office

in the church; (of which more afterwards.) And also that those offices themselves, as particularly that of the gospel ministry, need not be limited as it used to be, to persons of a liberal education; but some of late have been for having others that they have supposed to be persons of eminent experience, publicly licensed to preach, yea, and ordained to the work of the ministry; and some ministers have seemed to favor such a thing: But how little do they seem to look forward, and consider the unavoidable consequences of opening such a door? If once it should become a custom, or a thing generally approved and allowed of, to admit persons to the work of the ministry that have had no education for it, because of their remarkable experiences, and being persons of good understanding, how many lay persons would soon appear as candidates for the work of the ministry? I doubt not but that I have been acquainted with scores that would have desired it. And how shall we know where to stop? If one is admitted because his experiences are remarkable, another will think his experiences also remarkable; and we perhaps, shall not be able to deny but that they are near as great: If one is admitted because, besides experiences, he has good natural abilities, another by himself, and many of his neighbors, may be thought equal to him. It will be found of absolute necessity that there should be some certain, visible, limits fixed, to avoid bringing odium upon ourselves, and breeding uneasiness and strife amongst others; and I know of none better, and indeed no other that can well be fixed, than those that the prophet Zechariah fixes, viz. That those only should be appointed to be pastors or shepherds in God's church, that *have been taught to keep cattle from their youth*, or that have had an education for that purpose. Those ministers that have a disposition to break over these limits, if they should do so, and make a practice of it, would break down that fence, which they themselves after a while, after they had been wearied with the ill consequences, would be glad to have somebody else build up for them. Not but that there may probably be some persons in the land, that have had no education at college, that are in themselves better qualified for the work of

the ministry than some others that have taken their degrees, and are now ordained. But yet I believe the breaking over those bounds that have hitherto been set, in ordaining such persons, would in its consequences be a greater calamity, than the missing such persons in the work of the ministry. The opening a door for the admission of unlearned men to the work of the ministry, though they should be persons of extraordinary experience, would on some accounts be especially prejudicial at such a day as this; because such persons, for want of an extensive knowledge, are oftentimes forward to lead others into those things, which a people are in danger of at such a time, above all other times, viz. impulses, vain imaginations, superstition, indiscreet zeal, and such like extremes; instead of defending them from them, for which a people especially need a shepherd, at such an extraordinary season.

Another erroneous principle that it seems to me some have been, at least, in danger of, is, that ministers, because they speak as Christ's ambassadors, may assume the same style, and speak as with the same authority that the prophets of old did, yea, that Jesus Christ himself did in the xxiiid of Matthew, *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers*, &c. and other places; and that not only when they are speaking to the people, but also to their brethren in the ministry. Which principle is absurd, because it makes no difference in the different degrees and orders of messengers that God has sent into the world, though God has made a very great difference: For though they all come in some respect in the name of God, and with something of his authority, yet certainly there is a vast difference in the degree of authority with which God has invested them. Jesus Christ was one that was sent into the world as God's messenger, and so was one of his apostles, and so also is an ordinary pastor of a church; but yet it does not follow, that because Jesus Christ and an ordinary minister are both messengers of God, that therefore an ordinary minister in his office, is vested with an equal degree of authority, that Christ was, in his. As there is a great difference in their authority, and as Christ came as God's messenger, in a vastly

higher manner, so another style became him, more authoritative than is proper for us worms of the dust, though we also are messengers of inferior degree. It would be strange if God, when he has made so great a difference in the degree in which he has invested different messengers with his authority, should make no difference as to the outward appearance and shew of authority, in style and behavior, which is proper and fit to be seen in them. Though God has put great honor upon ministers, and they may speak as his ambassadors, yet he never intended that they should have the same outward appearance of authority and majesty, either in their behavior or speech, that his Son shall have, when he comes to judgment at the last day; though both come, in different respects and degrees, in the name of the Lord: Alas! Can any thing ever make it enter into the hearts of worms of the dust, that it is fit and suitable that it should be so?

Thus I have considered the two first of those three causes of error in conduct that were mentioned: I come now to the

Third and last cause of the errors of those that have appeared to be the subjects or zealous promoters of this work, viz. a being ignorant or unobservant of some particular things, by which the devil has special advantage.

And here I would particularly take notice:

1. Of some things with respect to the inward experiences of Christians themselves. And,

2. Something with regard to the external effects of experiences.

There are three things I would take notice of with regard to the experiences of Christians, by which the devil has many advantages against us.

1. The first thing is the *mixture* there oftentimes is in the experiences of true Christians; whereby when they have truly gracious experiences, and divine and spiritual discoveries and exercises, they have something else mixed with them, besides what is spiritual: There is a mixture of that which is natural, and that which is corrupt, with that which is divine. This is what Christians are liable to in the present exceeding imperfect state: The great imperfection of grace, and feeble-

ness and infancy of the new nature, and the great remains of corruption, together with the circumstances we are in, in this world, where we are encompassed all round with what tends to pollute us, exposes to this. And indeed it is not to be supposed that Christians ever have any experiences in this world that are wholly pure, entirely spiritual, without any mixture of what is natural and carnal: The beam of light, as it comes from the fountain of light upon our hearts, is pure, but as it is reflected thence, it is mixed: The seed as sent from heaven and planted in the heart, is pure, but as it springs up out of the heart, is impure; yea, there is commonly a much greater mixture, than persons for the most part seem to have any imagination of; I have often thought that the experiences of true Christians are very frequently as it is with some sorts of fruits, that are enveloped in several coverings of thick shells or pods, that are thrown away by him that gathers the fruit, and but a very small part of the whole bulk is the pure kernel, that is good to eat.

The things, of all which there is frequently some mixture with gracious experiences, yea, with very great and high experiences, are these three, *human, or natural affection and passion; impressions on the imagination*; and a degree of *self-righteousness* or *spiritual pride*. There is very often with that which is spiritual a great mixture of that affection or passion which arises from natural principles; so that nature has a very great hand in those vehement motions and flights of the passions that appear. Hence the same degrees of divine communications from heaven, shall have vastly different effects, in what outwardly appears, in persons of different natural tempers. The great mixture of that which is natural with that which is spiritual, is very manifest in the peculiar effects that divine influences have in some certain families, or persons of such a blood, in a distinguishing manner of the exerting of the passions and affections, and the manner of the outward expressions of them. I know some remarkable instances of this. The same is also evident by the different effects of divine communications on the same person at different times, and in different circumstances: The novelty of things, or the

sudden transition from an opposite extreme, and many other things that might be mentioned, greatly contribute to the raising of the passions. And sometimes there is not only a mixture of that which is common and natural with gracious experience, but even that which is animal, that which is in a great measure from the body, and is properly the result of the animal frame. In what true Christians feel of affections towards God, all is not always purely holy and divine; every thing that is felt in the affections does not arise from spiritual principles, but common and natural principles have a very great hand; an improper selflove may have a great share in the effect: God is not loved for his own sake, or for the excellency and beauty of his own perfections as he ought to be; nor have these things in any wise, that proportion in the effect that they ought to have. So in that love that true Christians have one to another, very often there is a great mixture of what arises from common and natural principles, with grace; and selflove has a great hand: The children of God are not loved purely for Christ's sake, but there may be a great mixture of that natural love that many sects of heretics have boasted of, who have been greatly united one to another, because they were of their company, on their side, against the rest of the world; yea, there may be a mixture of natural love to the opposite sex, with Christian and divine love. So there may be a great mixture in that sorrow for sin that the godly have; and also in their joys; natural principles may greatly contribute to what is felt, a great many ways, as might easily be shown, would it not make my discourse too lengthy. There is nothing that belongs to Christian experience that is more liable to a corrupt mixture than zeal, though it be an excellent virtue, a heavenly flame, when it is pure: But as it is exercised in those who are so little sanctified, and so little humbled, as we are in the present state, it is very apt to be mixed with human passion, yea, with corrupt hateful affections, pride and unchristian bitterness, and other things that are not from heaven but from hell.

Another thing that is often mixed with what is spiritual in the experiences of Christians, is, impressions on the imagin-

tion; whereby godly persons, together with a spiritual understanding of divine things, and conviction of their reality and certainty, and a strong and deep sense of their excellency or great importance upon their hearts, have strongly impressed on their minds external ideas or images of things. A degree of imagination in such a case, as I have observed elsewhere, is unavoidable, and necessarily arises from human nature, as constituted in the present state, and a degree of imagination is really useful and often is of great benefit; but when it is in too great a degree it becomes an impure mixture that is prejudicial. This mixture very often arises from the constitution of the body. It commonly greatly contributes to the other kind of mixture mentioned before, viz. of natural affections and passions; it helps to raise them to a great height.

Another thing that is often mixed with the experiences of true Christians, which is the worst mixture of all, is a degree of self-righteousness or spiritual pride. This is often mixed with the joy of Christians; the joy that they have is not purely the joy of faith, or a rejoicing in Christ Jesus, but is partly a rejoicing in themselves; there is oftentimes in their reflections looking upon themselves, and viewing their own high attainments, they rejoice partly because they are taken with their own experiences and great discoveries which make them in their own apprehensions so to excel; and this heightens all their passions, and especially those effects that are more external.

There is a much greater mixture of these things in the experiences of some Christians than others; in some the mixture is very great, as very much to obscure and hide the beauty of grace in them, like a thick smoke that hinders all the shining of the fire.

These things we ought to be well aware of, that we may not take all for gold that glistens, and that we may know what to countenance and encourage, and what to discourage; otherwise Satan will have a vast advantage against us, for he works in the corrupt mixture. Sometimes for want of persons distinguishing the one from the pure metal, those experiences are most admired by the persons themselves that are

the subjects of them, and by others that are not the most excellent. The great external effects, and vehemence of the passions, and violent agitations of the animal spirits, is sometimes much owing to the corrupt mixture; (as is very apparent in some instances) though it be not always so.

I have observed a great difference among those that are under high affections, and seem disposed to be earnestly talking to those that are about them; some insist much more, in their talk, on what they behold in God and Christ, the glory of the divine perfections, Christ's beauty and excellency and wonderful condescension and grace, and their own unworthiness, and the great and infinite obligations that they themselves and others are under to love and serve God; some insist almost wholly on their own high privileges, their assurance, and of God's love and favor, and the weakness and wickedness of opposers, and how much they are above their reach. The latter may have much of the presence of God, but their experiences do not appear to be so solid and unmixed as the former. And there is a great deal of difference in persons' earnestness in their talk and behavior; in some it seems to come indeed from the fullness of their hearts, and from the great sense they have of truth, a deep sense of the certainty and infinite greatness, excellency, and importance of divine and eternal things, attended with all appearances of great humility; in others their earnestness seems to arise from a great mixture of human passion, and an undue and intemperate agitation of the spirits, which appears by their earnestness and vehemence not being proportioned to the nature of the subject they insist on, but they are violent in every thing they say, as much when they are talking of things of smaller importance, as when speaking of things of greater weight. I have seen it thus in an instance or two, in which this vehemence at length issued in distraction. And there have been some few instances of a more extraordinary nature still, even of persons finding themselves disposed earnestly to talk and cry out, from an unaccountable kind of bodily pressure, without any extraordinary view of any thing in their minds, or sense of any thing up-

on their hearts, wherein probably there was the immediate hand of the devil.

II. Another thing by which the devil has great advantage, is, the unheeded *defects* there sometimes are in the experiences of true Christians, and those high affections wherein there is much that is truly good.

What I now have respect to, is something diverse from that defect, or imperfection of degree, which is in every holy disposition and exercise in this life, in the best of the saints. What I aim at is experiences being especially defective in some particular thing, that ought to be in them; which, though it is not an essential defect, or such a defect as is in the experiences of hypocrites, which renders them utterly vain, monstrous, and altogether abominable to God, yet is such a defect as maims and deforms the experience; the essence of truly Christian experience is not wanting, but yet that is wanting that is very needful in order to the proper beauty of the image of Christ in such a person's experiences; that things are very much out of a due proportion. There is indeed much of some things, but at the same time there is too little of some other things that should bear a proportion, that the defect very much deforms the Christian, and is unbecoming in the sight of God.

What I observed before was something that deformed the Christian, as it was *too much*, something mixed, that is not belonging to the Christian as such; what I speak of now is something that deforms the Christian the other way, viz. by their *not* being *enough*, something wanting, that does belong to the Christian as such. The one deforms the Christian as a monstrous excrescence, the other as thereby the new creature is maimed, and some member in a great measure wanting, or so small and withering as to be very much out of due proportion. This is another spiritual calamity that the saints are liable to, through the great imperfection of grace in this life; like the chicken in the egg, in the beginnings of its formation, in which, though there are indeed the rudiments or lineaments of all the parts, yet some few parts are plain to be seen, when others are hid, so that without a microscope it appears very monstrous.

When this deficiency and disproportion is great, as sometimes it is in real saints, it is not only a great deformity in itself, but has many ill consequences; it gives the devil great advantage, and leaves a door open for corruption, and exposes to very deformed and unlovely actions, and issues oftentimes in the great wounding of the soul.

For the better understanding of this matter, we may observe that God in the revelation that he has made of himself to the world by Jesus Christ, has taken care to give a proportionable manifestation of two kinds of excellencies or perfections of his nature, viz. Those that especially tend to possess us with awe and reverence, and to search and humble us, and those that tend to win, and draw, and encourage us. By *the one*, he appears as an infinitely great, pure, holy, and heart searching judge; *by the other*, as a gentle and gracious father and a loving friend: By the one he is a pure, searching and burning flame; by the other, a most refreshing light. These two kinds of attributes are as it were admirably tempered together in the revelation of the gospel: There is a proportionable manifestation of justice and mercy, holiness and grace, majesty and gentleness, authority and condescension. God hath thus ordered that his diverse excellencies, as he reveals himself in the face of Jesus Christ, should have a proportionable manifestation therein, providing for our necessities; he knew it to be of great consequence that our apprehensions of these diverse perfections of his nature should be duly proportioned one to another; a defect on the one hand, viz. Having much of a discovery of his love and grace, without a proportionable discovery of his awful majesty, and his holy and searching purity, would tend to spiritual pride, carnal confidence, and presumption; and a defect on the other hand, viz. Having much of a discovery of his holy majesty, without a proportionable discovery of his grace, tends to unbelief, a sinful fearfulness, and spirit of bondage: And therefore herein chiefly consists that deficiency of experiences that I am now speaking of. The revelation God has made of himself in his word, and the provision made for our spiritual welfare in the gospel is perfect, but yet the actual light and communications we have, are not

perfect, but many ways exceeding imperfect and maimed. And experience plainly shews that Christians may have high experiences in some respects, and yet their circumstances may be unhappy in this regard, that their experiences and discoveries are no more general. There is a great difference among Christians in this respect, some have much more general discoveries than others, who are upon many accounts the most amiable Christians. Christians may have experiences that are very high, and yet there may be very much of this deficiency and disproportion: Their high experiences are truly from the Spirit of God, but sin comes in by the defect; (as indeed all sin is originally from a defective privative cause) and in such a case high discoveries, at the same time that they are enjoyed, may be, and sometimes are the occasion, or *causa sine qua non* of sin; sin may come in at that back door, the gap that is left open; as spiritual pride often does: And many times the Spirit of God is quenched by this means, and God punishes the pride and presumption that rises, by bringing such darkness, and suffering such awful consequences and horrid temptations, as are enough to make one's hair stand on end to hear them. Christians therefore should diligently observe their own hearts as to this matter, and should pray to God that he would give us experiences in which one thing may bear a proportion to another, that God may be honored and their souls edified thereby; and ministers should have an eye to this, in their private dealings with the souls of their people.

It is chiefly from such a defect of experiences that some things have arisen that have been pretty common among true Christians of late, that have been supposed by many to have risen from a good cause; as particularly talking of divine and heavenly things, and expressing divine joys with laughter or a light behavior. I believe, in many instances, such things have arisen from a good cause, as their *causa sine qua non*, that high discoveries and gracious joyful affections have been the occasion of them; but the proper cause has been sin, even that odious defect in their experience, whereby there has been wanting a sense of the awful and holy majesty of

God as present with them, and their nothingness and vileness before him, proportionable to the sense they have had of God's grace and the love of Christ. And the same is true in many cases of persons unsuitable boldness, their disposition to speak with authority, intemperate zeal, and many other things that sometimes appear in true Christians, under great religious affections.

And sometimes the vehemence of the motion of the animal spirits, under great affections, is owing in considerable measure, to experiences being thus partial. I have known it in several instances, that persons have been greatly affected with the dying love of Christ, and the consideration of the happiness of the enjoyment of him in Heaven, and other things of that nature, and their animal spirits at the same time have been in a great emotion, but in the midst of it have had given them a deep sense of the awful, holy majesty of God, and it has at once composed them, and quieted animal nature, without diminishing their comfort, but only has made it of a better, and more solid nature; when they have had a sense both of the majesty and grace of God, one thing has as it were balanced another, and caused a more happy sedateness and composure of body and mind.

From these things we may learn how to judge of experiences, and to estimate their goodness. Those are not always the best experiences, that are attended with the most violent affections, and most vehement motions of the animal spirits, or that have the greatest effects on the body; nor are they always the best, that do most dispose persons to abound in talk to others, and to speak in the most vehement manner; (though these things often arise from the greatness of spiritual experiences) but those are the most excellent experiences that are qualified as follows:

1. That have the least mixture, or are the most purely spiritual.

2. That are the least deficient and partial, in which the diverse things that appertain to Christian experience are proportionable one to another. And

3. That are raised to the highest degree: It is no matter how high they are raised if they are qualified as before mentioned, the higher the better. Experiences thus qualified, will be attended with the most amiable behavior, and will bring forth the most solid and sweet fruits, and will be the most durable, and will have the greatest effect on the abiding temper of the soul.

If God is pleased to carry on this work, and it should prove to be the dawning of a general revival of the Christian church, it may be expected that the time will come before long, when the experiences of Christians shall be much more generally thus qualified. We must expect green fruits before we have ripe ones. It is probable that hereafter the discoveries which the saints shall have of divine things, will be in a much higher degree than yet have been; but yet shall be so ordered of an infinitely wise and allsufficient God, that they shall not have so great an effect, in proportion, on the body, and will be less oppressive to nature; and that the outward manifestations will rather be like those that were in Stephen, when he was full of the Holy Ghost, when *all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel.* Their inward fullness of the Spirit of God, in his divine, amiable and sweet influences, shall as it were shine forth in an heavenly aspect, and manner of speech and behavior. But

III. There is another thing concerning experiences of Christians, of which it is of yet greater importance that we should be aware, than either of the preceding, and that is the *degenerating of experiences.* What I mean is something diverse from the mere decay of experiences, or their gradually vanishing, by persons' losing their sense of things; it is persons' experiences growing by degrees worse and worse in their kind, more and more partial and deficient, in which things are more out of due proportion; and also have more and more of a corrupt mixture, the spiritual part decreases, and the other useless and hurtful parts greatly increase. There is such a thing, and it is very frequent, as experience abundantly evidences: I have seen it in very many instances;

and great are the mischiefs that have arisen through want of being more aware of it.

There is commonly, as I observed before, in high experiences, besides that which is spiritual, a mixture of three things, viz. natural or common affections and workings of the imagination, and a degree of selfrighteousness or spiritual pride. Now it often comes to pass, that through persons not distinguishing the wheat from the chaff, and for want of watchfulness and humble jealousy of themselves, and laying great weight on the natural and imaginary part, and yielding to it, and indulging of it, that part grows and increases, and the spiritual part decreases; the devil sets in, and works in the corrupt part, and cherishes it to his utmost; until at length the experiences of some persons, who began well, come to but little else, but violent motions of carnal affections, with great heats of the imagination, and a great degree of enthusiasm, and swelling of spiritual pride; very much like some fruits which bud, blossom and kernel well, but afterwards are blasted with an excess of moisture; so that though the bulk is monstrously great, yet there is little else in it but what is useless and unwholesome. It appears to me very probable, that many of the heresies that have arisen, and sects that have appeared in the Christian world, in one age and another, with wild enthusiastical notions and practices, began at first by this means, that it was such a degenerating of experiences that first gave rise to them, or at least led the way to them.

There is nothing in the world that does so much expose to this degenerating of experiences, as an unheeded spiritual pride and selfconfidence, and persons being conceited of their own stock, without an humble, daily and continued dependence on God. And this very thing seems to be typified of old, by the corrupting of the manna. Some of the children of Israel, because they had gathered a store of manna, trusted in it, there being as they apprehended, sufficient in the store they had gathered and laid up, without humbly looking to heaven, and stooping to the earth for daily supplies; and the consequence was, that their manna bred worms and stank, Exod.

xvi. 20. Pride, above all things promotes this degeneracy of experiences, because it grieves and quenches the Spirit of the Lamb of God, and so kills the spiritual part; and it cherishes the natural part, it inflames the carnal affections, and heats the imagination.

The unhappy person that is the subject of such a degeneracy of experiences, for the most part, is not sensible of his own calamity; but because he finds himself still violently moved, and greater heats of zeal, and more vehement motions of his animal spirits, thinks himself fuller of the Spirit of God than ever. But indeed it is with him, as the apostle says of the Galatians, Gal. iii. 3. "Having begun in the Spirit, they are made perfect by the flesh.

By the mixture there is of common affection with love to God the love of true Christians is liable to degenerate, and to be more and more built on the foundation of a supposition of being his high and peculiar favorites, and less and less on an apprehension of the excellency of God's nature, as he is in himself. So the joy of Christians, by reason of the mixture there is with spiritual joy, is liable to degenerate, and to come to that at last, as to be but little else but joy in self, joy in a person's own supposed eminency, and distinction from others in the favor of God. So zeal, that at first might be in great part spiritual, yet through the mixture there is, in a long continuance of opposition and controversy, may degenerate more and more into human and proud passion, and may come to bitterness, and even a degree of hatred. And so love to the brethren may by degrees come to but little else but fondness, and zeal for a party; yea, through a mixture of a natural love to the opposite sex, may degenerate more and more, until it issues in that which is criminal and gross. And I leave it with those who are better acquainted with ecclesiastical history, to inquire whether such a degeneracy of affections as this, might not be the first thing that led the way, and gave occasion to the rise of the abominable notions of some sects that have arisen, concerning the community of women. However that is, yet certainly the mutual embraces and kisses of persons of different sexes, under the notion of Christian love and holy

kisses, are utterly to be disallowed and abominated, as having the most direct tendency quickly to turn Christian love into unclean and brutish lust, which will not be the better, but ten times the worse, for being christened by the name of Christian love.

I should also think it advisable, that meetings of young people, of both sexes, in the evening, by themselves, without a minister, or any elder people amongst them, for religious exercises, should be avoided: For though for the present, while their minds are greatly solemnized with lively impressions, and a deep sense of divine things, there may appear no ill consequence; yet we must look to the further end of things, and guard against future dangers and advantages that Satan might gain against us. As a lively, solemn sense of divine things on the minds of young persons may gradually decay, so there will be danger that an ill improvement of these meetings may gradually prevail; if not in any unsuitable behavior while together in the meeting, yet when they break up to go home, they may naturally consort together in couples, for other than religious purposes; and it may at last come to that, that young persons may go to such meetings, chiefly for the sake of such an opportunity for company keeping.

The *defect* there sometimes is in the experiences of Christians exposes them to degenerate, as well as the mixture that they have. Deficient maimed experiences do sometimes become more and more so: The mind, being wholly intent upon those things that are in view, and those that are most wanting being neglected, there is less and less of them, and so the gap for corruption to come in grows wider and wider. And commonly both these causes of the degenerating of experiences operate together.

We had need to be jealous over ourselves with a godly jealousy, as the apostle was over the Christian Corinthians, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so our minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. God indeed will never suffer his true saints totally and finally to fall away, but yet may punish their pride and selfconfidence, by suffering them to be long led into a

dreadful wilderness, by the subtle serpent, to the great wounding of their own souls, and the interest of religion.

And before I dismiss this head of the degenerating of experiences, I would mention one thing more that tends to it; and that is, persons' aiming in their experience to go beyond the rule of God's word, i. e. aiming at that, *which is indeed*, in some respect, beyond the rule. Thus some persons have endeavored utterly to root out and abolish all natural affection, or any special affection or respect to their near relations, under a notion that no other love ought to be allowed, but spiritual love, and that all other love is to be abolished as carnal, and that it becomes Christians to love none upon the account of any thing else, but the image of God; and that therefore love should go out to one and another only in that proportion in which the image of God is seen in them. They might as well argue that a man ought utterly to disallow of, and endeavor to abolish all love or appetite to his daily food, under a notion that it is a carnal appetite, and that no other appetite should be tolerated but spiritual appetites. Why should the saints strive after that, as an high attainment in holiness, which the apostle in Rom. i.31, mentions as one instance wherein the Heathen had got to the most horrid pass in wickedness, viz. *A being without natural affection?*

Some have doubted whether they might pray for the conversion and salvation of the souls of their children, any more than for the souls of others; because the salvation of the souls of others would be as much to God's glory, as the salvation of their children; and they have supposed that to pray most for their own, would shew a selfish disposition. So they have been afraid to tolerate a compassionate grief and concern for their nearest friends, for fear it would be an argument of want of resignation to God.

And it is true, there is great danger of persons setting their hearts too much upon their earthly friends; our love to earthly friends ought to be under the government of the love of God, and should be attended with a spirit of submission and resignation to his will, and every thing should be subordinated to his glory: But that is no argument that these affections

should be entirely abolished, which the Creator of the world has put within mankind, for the good of mankind, and because he saw they would be needful for them, as they must be united in society, in the present state, and are of great use, when kept in their proper place; and to endeavor totally to root them out, would be to reproach and oppose the wisdom of the Creator. Nor is the being of these natural inclinations, if well regulated, inconsistent with any part of our duty to God, or any argument of a sinful selfishness, any more than the natural abhorrence that there is in the human nature of pain, and natural inclination to ease that was in the man Christ Jesus himself.

It is the duty of parents to be more concerned, and to pray more for the salvation of their children, than for the children of their neighbors; as much as it is the duty of a minister to be more concerned for the salvation of the souls of his flock, and to pray more for them, than those of other congregations, because they are committed to his care; so our near friends are more committed to our care than others, and our near neighbors, than those that live at a great distance; and the people of our land and nation are more in some sense, committed to our care than the people of China, and we ought to pray more for them, and to be more concerned that the kingdom of Christ should flourish among them, than in another country, where it would be as much, and no more for the glory of God. Compassion ought to be especially exercised towards friends, Job, vi. 14. Christ did not frown upon a special affection and compassion for near friends, but countenanced and encouraged it, from time to time, in those that in the exercise of such an affection and compassion, applied to him for relief for their friends; as in the instance of the woman of Canaan, Jairus, Mary and Martha, the centurion, the widow of Nain, and many others. The Apostle Paul, though a man as much resigned and devoted to God, and under the power of his love, perhaps as any mere man that ever lived, yet had a peculiar concern for his countrymen the Jews, the rather on that account that they were his *brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh*; he had a very high degree of compassionate grief

for them, insomuch, that he tells us he had great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart for them, and could wish himself accursed from Christ for them.

There are many things that are proper for the saints in heaven, that are not suitable to the state God has set us in, in this world: And for Christians, in these and other instances, to affect to go beyond the present state of mankind, and what God has appointed as fit for it, is an instance of that which the wise man calls *a being righteous overmuch*, and has a tendency to open a door for Satan, and to cause religious affections to degenerate into something very unbecoming of Christians.

Thus I have, as I proposed, taken notice of some things with regard to the inward experiences of Christians, by which Satan has an advantage.

I now proceed in the

2d. Place, to take notice of something with regard to the external effects of experiences, which also gives Satan an advantage. What I have respect to, is the secret and unaccountable influence that custom has upon persons, with respect to the external effects and manifestations of the inward affections of the mind. By custom, I mean, both a person's being accustomed to a thing in himself, in his own common, allowed and indulged practice, and also the countenance and approbation of others amongst whom he dwells, by their general voice and practice. It is well known, and appears sufficiently by what I have said already in this treatise and elsewhere, that I am far from ascribing all the late uncommon effects and outward manifestations of inward experiences to custom and fashion, as some do; I know it to be otherwise, if it be possible for me to know any thing of this nature by the most critical observation, under all manner of opportunities of observing. But yet, this also is exceeding evident by experience, that custom has a strange influence in these things: I know it by the different manners and degrees of external effects and manifestations of great affections and high discoveries, in different towns, according to what persons are gradually led into, and insensibly habituated to, by example and custom; and also in the same place, at different times, according to the conduct

that they have: If some person is among them to conduct them, that much countenances and encourages such kind of outward manifestations of great affections, they naturally and insensibly prevail, and grow by degrees unavoidable; but when afterwards they come under another kind of conduct, the manner of external appearances will strangely alter: And yet it seems to be without any proper design or contrivance of those in whom there is this alteration; it is not properly affected by them, but the influence of example and custom is secret and insensible to the persons themselves. These things have a vast influence in the manner of persons manifesting their joys, whether with smiles and an air of lightness, or whether with more solemnity and reverence; and so they have a great influence as to the disposition persons have, under high affections, to abound in talk; and also as to the manner of their speaking, the loudness and vehemence of their speech; (though it would be exceeding unjust, and against all the evidence of fact and experience, and the reason of things, to lay all dispositions persons have to be much in speaking to others, and to speak in a very earnest manner, to custom.) It is manifest that example and custom has some way or other, a secret and unsearchable influence on those actions that are involuntary, by the difference that there is in different places, and in the same places at different times, according to the diverse examples and conduct that they have.

Therefore, though it would be very unreasonable, and prejudicial to the interest of religion, to frown upon all these extraordinary external effects and manifestations of great religious affections, (for a measure of them is natural, necessary and beautiful, and the effect in no wise disproportioned to the spiritual cause, and is of great benefit to promote religion) yet I think they greatly err who think that these things should be wholly unlimited, and that all should be encouraged in going in these things to the utmost length that they feel themselves inclined to: The consequence of this will be very bad: There ought to be a gentle restraint held upon these things, and there should be a prudent care taken of persons in such extraordinary circumstances, and they should be moderately ad-

vised at proper seasons, not to make more ado than there is need of, but rather to hold a restraint upon their inclinations; otherwise extraordinary outward effects will grow upon them, they will be more and more natural and unavoidable, and the extraordinary outward show will increase, without any increase of the internal cause; persons will find themselves under a kind of necessity of making a great ado, with less and less affection of soul, until at length almost any slight emotion will set them going, and they will be more and more violent and boisterous, and will grow louder and louder, until their actions and behavior becomes indeed very absurd. These things experience proves.

Thus I have taken notice of the more general causes whence the errors that have attended this great revival of religion have risen, and under each head have observed some particular errors that have flowed from these fountains. I now procced as I proposed in the

Second place, to take notice of some particular errors that have risen from several of these causes; in some perhaps they have been chiefly owing to one, and in others to another, and in others to the influence of several, or all conjunctly. And here the

1*st* Thing I would take notice of, is, censuring others that are professing Christians, in good standing in the visible church, as unconverted. I need not repeat what I have elsewhere said to shew this to be against the plain, and frequent, and strict prohibitions of the word of God: It is the worst disease that has attended this work, most contrary to the spirit and rules of Christianity, and of worse consequences. There is a most unhappy tincture that the minds of many, both ministers and people have received that way. The manner of many has been, when they first enter into conversation with any person, that seems to have any shew or make any pretences to religion, to discern him, or to fix a judgment of him, from his manner of talking of things of religion, whether he be converted, or experimentally acquainted with vital piety or not, and then to treat him accordingly, and freely to express their thoughts of him to others, especially those that

they have a good opinion of as true Christians, and accepted as brethren and companions in Christ; or if they do not declare their minds expressly, yet by their manner of speaking of them, at least to their friends, they will show plainly what their thoughts are. So when they have heard any minister pray or preach, their first work has been to observe him on a design of discerning him, whether he be a converted man or no; whether he prays like one that feels the saving power of God's Spirit in his heart, and whether he preaches like one that knows what he says. It has been so much the way in some places, that many new converts do not know but it is their duty to do so, they know no other way. And when once persons yield to such a notion, and give in to such a humor, they will quickly grow very discerning in their own apprehension, they think they can easily tell a hypocrite: And when once they have passed their censure every thing seems to confirm it, they see more and more in the person that they have censured, that seems to them to shew plainly that he is an unconverted man. And then, if the person censured be a minister, every thing in his public performances seems dead and sapless, and to do them no good at all, but on the contrary to be of deadening influence, and poisonous to the soul; yea, it seems worse and worse to them, his preaching grows more and more intolerable: Which is owing to a secret, strong prejudice, that steals in more and more upon the mind, as experience plainly and certainly shows. When the Spirit of God was wonderfully poured out in this place, more than seven years ago, and near thirty souls in a week, take one with another, for five or six weeks together, were to appearance brought home to Christ, and all the town seemed to be alive and full of God, there was no such notion or humor prevailing here; when ministers preached here, as very many did at that time, young and old, our people did not go about to discern whether they were men of experience or not: They did not know that they must: Mr. Stoddard never brought them up in that way; it did not seem natural to them to go about any thing of that nature, nor did any such thing enter into their hearts; but when any minister preached, the business of every

one was to listen and attend to what he said, and apply it to his own heart, and make the utmost improvement of it. And it is remarkable, that never did there appear such a disposition in the people, to relish, approve of, and admire ministers preaching as at that time : Such expressions as these were frequent in the mouths of one and another, on occasion of the preaching of strangers here, viz. *That they rejoiced that there were so many such eminent ministers in the country ; and they wondered they never heard the fame of them before : They were thankful that other towns had so good means ;* and the like.... And scarcely ever did any minister preach here, but his preaching did some remarkable service ; as I had good opportunity to know, because at that time, I had particular acquaintance with most of the persons in the town, in their soul concerns. That it has been so much otherwise of late in many places in the land, is another instance of the secret and powerful influence of custom and example.

There has been an unhappy disposition in some ministers towards their brethren in the ministry in this respect, which has encouraged and greatly promoted such a spirit among some of their people. A wrong improvement has been made of Christ's scourging the buyers and sellers out of the temple ; it has been expected by some, that Christ was now about thus to purge his house of unconverted ministers, and this has made it more natural to them to think that they should do Christ service, and act as coworkers with him, to put to their hand, and endeavor by all means to cashier those ministers that they thought to be unconverted. Indeed it appears to me probable that the time is coming, when awful judgments will be executed on unfaithful ministers, and that no sort of men in the world will be so much exposed to divine judgments ; but then we should leave that work to Christ, who is the searcher of hearts, and to whom vengeance belongs ; and not without warrant, take the scourge out of his hand into our own. There has been too much of a disposition in some, as it were to give ministers over as reprobates, that have been looked upon as wolves in sheep's clothing ; which has tended to promote and encourage a spirit of bitterness towards them,

and to make it natural to treat them too much as if they knew God hated them. If God's children knew that others were reprobates, it would not be required of them to love them; we may hate those that we know God hates; as it is lawful to hate the devil, and as the saints at the day of judgment will hate the wicked. Some have been too apt to look for fire from heaven upon particular ministers; and this has naturally excited that disposition to call for it, that Christ rebuked in his disciples at Samaria. For my part, though I believe no sort of men on earth are so exposed to spiritual judgments as wicked ministers, yet I feel no disposition to treat any minister as if I supposed that he was finally rejected of God; for I cannot but hope that there is coming a day of such great grace, a time so appointed for the magnifying the riches and sovereignty of divine mercy, beyond what ever was, that a great number of unconverted ministers will obtain mercy. There was no sort of persons in Christ's time that were so guilty, and so hardened, and towards whom Christ manifested such great indignation, as the Priests and Scribes, and there were no such persecutors of Christ and his disciples as they; and yet, in that great outpouring of the spirit that began on the day of pentecost, though it began with the common people, yet in the progress of the work, after awhile, *a great company of priests in Jerusalem were obedient to the faith*, Acts vi. 7. And Saul, one of the most violent of all the persecuting Pharisees, became afterwards the greatest promoter of the work of God that ever was. I hope we shall yet see in many instances a fulfilment of that in Isa. xxix. 24. "They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine."

Nothing has been gained by this practice. The end that some have aimed at in it has not been obtained, nor is ever like to be. Possibly some have openly censured ministers, and encouraged their people's uneasiness under them, in hopes that it would soon come to that, that the uneasiness would be so general, and so great, that unconverted ministers in general would be cast off, and that then things would go on happily: But there is no likelihood of it. The devil indeed has ob-

tained his end; this practice has bred a great deal of unhappiness among ministers and people, has spoiled Christians' enjoyment of sabbaths, and made them their most uneasy, uncomfortable and unprofitable days, and has stirred up great contention, and set all in a flame; and in one place and another where there was a glorious work of God's Spirit begun, it has in a great measure knocked all in the head, and their ministers hold their places. Some have aimed at a better end in censuring ministers; they have supposed it to be a likely means to awaken them: Whereas indeed, there is no one thing has had so great a tendency to prevent the awakening of disaffected ministers in general: And no one thing has actually had such influence to lock up the minds of ministers against any good effect of this great work of God in the land upon their minds in this respect: I have known instances of some that seemed to be much moved by the first appearance of this work, but since have seemed to be greatly deadened by what has appeared of this nature. And if there be one or two instances of ministers that have been awakened by it, there are ten to one on whom it has had a contrary influence. The worst enemies of this work have been inwardly eased by this practice; they have made a shield of it to defend their consciences, and have been glad that it has been carried to so great a length; at the same time that they have looked upon it, and improved it, as a door opened for them to be more bold in opposing the work in general.

There is no such dreadful danger of natural men's being undone by our forbearing thus to censure them, and carrying it towards them as visible Christians; it will be no bloody, hell peopling charity, as some seem to suppose, when it is known that we do not treat them as Christians, because we have taken it upon us to pass a judgment on their state, on any trial, or exercise of our skill in examining and discerning them, but only as allowing them to be worthy of a public charity, on their profession and good external behavior; any more than Judas was in danger of being deceived, by Christ's treating him a long time as a disciple, and sending him forth as an apostle, (because he did not then take it upon him to act

as the judge and searcher of hearts, but only as the head of the visible church.) Indeed such a charity as this may be abused by some, as every thing is, and will be, that is in its own nature proper, and of never so good tendency. I say nothing against dealing thoroughly with conscience, by the most convincing and searching dispensation of the word of God: I do not desire that that sword should be sheathed, or gently handled by ministers; but let it be used as a two edged sword, to pierce, even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, joints and marrow; let conscience be dealt with, without any compliments; let ministers handle it in flaming fire, without having any more mercy on it, than the furnace has on those metals that are tried in it. But let us let men's persons alone: Let the word of God judge them, but do not let us take it upon us until we have warrant for it.

Some have been ready to censure ministers because they seem, in comparison of some other ministers, to be very cold and lifeless in their ministerial performances. But then it should be considered that for ought we know, God may hereafter raise up ministers of so much more excellent and heavenly qualifications, and so much more spiritual and divine in their performances, that there may appear as great a difference between them, and those that now seem the most lively, as there is now between them, and others that are called dead and sapless; and those that are now called lively ministers may appear to their hearers, when they compare them with others that shall excel them, as wretchedly mean, and their performances poor, dead, dry things; and many may be ready to be prejudiced against them, as accounting them good for nothing, and it may be calling them soul murderers. What a poor figure may we suppose, the most lively of us, and those that are most admired by the people, do make in the eyes of one of the saints of heaven, any otherwise than as their deadness, deformity and rottenness is hid by the vail of Christ's righteousness?

Another thing that has been supposed to be sufficient warrant for openly censuring ministers as unconverted, is their opposing this work of God, that has lately been carried on in

the land. And there can be no doubt with me but that opposition against this work may be such, as to render either ministers or people, truly scandalous, and expose them to public ecclesiastical censure; and that ministers hereby may utterly defeat the design of ther ministry, as I observed before; and so give their people just cause of uneasiness; I should not think that any person had power to oblige me, constantly to attend the ministry of one, who did from time to time, plainly pray and preach against this work, or speak reproachfully of it frequently in his public performances, after all Christian methods had been used for a remedy, and to no purpose.

But as to determining how far opposing this work is consistent with a state of grace, or how far, and for how long time, some persons of good experience in their own souls, through prejudices they have received from the errors that have been mixed with this work, or through some peculiar disadvantages they are under to behold things in a right view of them, by reason of the persons they converse with, or their own cold and dead frames, is, as experience shows, a very difficult thing; I have seen that which abundantly convinces me that the business is too high for me; I am glad that God has not committed such a difficult affair to me; I can joyfully leave it wholly in his hands, who is infinitely fit for it, without meddling at all with it myself. We may represent it as exceeding dangerous to oppose this work, for this we have good warrant in the word of God; but I know of no necessity we are under to determine whether it be possible for those that are guilty of it to be in a state of grace or no.

God seems so strictly to have forbidden this practice, of our judging our brethren in the visible church, not only because he knew that we were too much of babes, infinitely too weak, fallible and blind, to be well capacitated for it, but also because he knew that it was not a work suited to our proud hearts; that it would be setting us vastly too high, and making us too much lords over our fellow creatures. Judging our brethren and passing a condemnatory sentence upon them, seems to carry in it an act of authority, especially in so great a case, to sentence them with respect to that state of their

hearts, on which depends their liableness to eternal damnation; as is evident by such interrogations as these, (to hear which from God's mouth, is enough to make us shrink into nothing with shame and confusion, and a sense of our own blindness and worthlessness) Rom. xiv. 4. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." And Jam. iv. 12. "There is one lawgiver that is able to save and to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?" Our wise and merciful shepherd has graciously taken care not to lay in our way such a temptation to pride; he has cut up all such poison out of our pasture; and therefore we should not desire to have it restored. Blessed be his name, that he has not laid such a temptation in the way of my pride! I know that in order to be fit for this business I must not only be vastly more knowing, but more humble than I am.

Though I believe some of God's own children have of late been very guilty in this matter, yet by what is said of it in the scripture, it appears to me very likely, that before these things which God has lately begun, have an end, God will awfully rebuke that practice; may it in sovereign and infinite mercy be prevented, by the deep and open humiliation of those that have openly practised it.

As this practice ought to be avoided, so should all such open, visible, marks of distinction and separation that imply it; as particularly, distinguishing such as we have judged to be in a converted state with the compellations of *brother* or *sister*; any further than there is a visible ecclesiastical distinction. In those places where it is the manner to receive such, and such only to the communion of the visible church, as recommend themselves by giving a satisfying account of their inward experiences, there Christians may openly distinguish such persons, in their speech and ordinary behavior, with a visible separation, without being inconsistent with themselves: And I do not now pretend to meddle with that controversy, whether such an account of experience be requisite to church fellowship: But certainly, to admit persons to communion with us as brethren in the visible church,

and then visibly to reject them, and to make an open distinction between them and others, by different names or appellations, is to be inconsistent with ourselves; it is to make a visible church within a visible church, and visibly to divide between sheep and goats, setting one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

This bitter root of censoriousness must be totally rooted out, as we would prepare the way of the Lord. It has nourished and upheld many other things contrary to the humility, meekness, and love of the gospel. The minds of many have received an unhappy turn, in some respects, with their religion: There is a certain point or sharpness, a disposition to a kind of warmth, that does not savor of that meek, lamblike, sweet disposition that becomes Christians: Many have now been so long habituated to it, that they do not know how to get out of it; but we must get out of it; the point and sharpness must be blunted, and we must learn another way of manifesting our zeal for God.

There is a way of reflecting on others, and censuring them in open prayer, that some have; which though it has a fair shew of love, yet is indeed the boldest way of reproaching others imaginable, because there is implied in it an appeal to the most high God, concerning the truth of their censures and reflections.

And here I would also observe by the way, that some have a way of joining a sort of imprecations with their petitions for others, though but conditional ones, that appear to me wholly needless and improper: They pray that others may either be converted or removed. I never heard nor read of any such thing practised in the church of God until now, unless it be with respect to some of the most visibly and notoriously abandoned enemies of the church of God. This is a sort of cursing men in our prayers, adding a curse with our blessing; whereas the rule is *bless and curse not*. To pray that God would kill another, is to curse him with the like curse wherewith Elisha cursed the children that came out of Bethel. And the case must be very great and extraordinary indeed to warrant it, unless we were prophets, and did not speak our own

words, but words indited by the immediate inspiration of the Spirit of God. It is pleaded that if God has no design of converting others, it is best for them, as well as best for others, that they should be immediately taken away and sent to hell before they have contracted more guilt. To which I would say, that so it was best that those children that met Elisha, seeing God had no design of converting them, should die immediately as they did; but yet Elisha's imprecating that sudden death upon them, was cursing them; and therefore, would not have been lawful for one that did not speak in the name of the Lord as a prophet.

And then if we give way to such things as these, where shall we stop? A child that suspects he has an unconverted father and mother, may pray openly that his father and mother may either be converted, or taken away and sent to hell now quickly, before their guilt is greater. (For unconverted parents are as likely to poison the souls of their family in their manner of training them up, as unconverted ministers are to poison their people.) And so it might come to that, that it might be a common thing all over the country, for children to pray after this manner concerning their parents, and brethren and sisters concerning one another, and husbands concerning their wives, and wives concerning husbands; and so for persons to pray concerning all their unconverted friends and neighbors; and not only so, but we may also pray concerning all those saints that are not lively Christians, that they may either be enlivened or taken away; if that be true that is often said by some at this day, that these cold dead saints do more hurt than natural men, and lead more souls to hell, and that it would be well for mankind if they were all dead.

How needless are such petitions or imprecations as these? What benefit is there of them? Why is it not sufficient for us to pray that God would provide for his church, and the good of souls, and take care of his own flock, and give it needful means and advantages for its spiritual prosperity? Does God need to be directed by us in what way he shall do it? What need we ask of God to do it by killing such and such persons, if he does not convert them? Unless we delight in the

thoughts of God's answering us in such terrible ways, and with such awful manifestations of his wrath to our fellow creatures.

And why do not ministers direct sinners to pray for themselves, that God would either convert them or kill them, and send them to hell now, before their guilt is greater? In this way we should lead persons in the next place to self murder: For many probably would soon begin to think that that which they may pray for, they may seek, and use the means of.

Some with whom I have discoursed about this way of praying, have said, that the Spirit of God, as it were, forces them to utter themselves thus, as it were forces out such words from their mouths, when otherwise they should not dare to utter them. But such a kind of impulse does not look like the influence of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God sometimes strongly inclines men to utter words; but not by putting expressions into the mouth, and urging to utter them; but by filling the heart with a sense of divine things, and holy affections; and those affections and that sense inclines the mouth to speak. That other way of men's being urged to use certain expressions, by an unaccountable force, is very probably from the influence of the spirit of the devil.

2. Another thing I would take notice of, in the management of which there has been much error and misconduct, is, lay exhorting; about which there has been abundance of disputing, jangling, and contention.

In the midst of all the disputes that have been, I suppose that all are agreed as to these two things, viz.

1. That all exhorting one another of laymen is not unlawful or improper, but on the contrary, that some exhorting is a Christian duty. And,

2. I suppose also, all will allow that there is something that is proper only for ministers; that there is some kind or way of exhorting and teaching or other, that belongs only to *the office of teachers*. All will allow, that God has appointed such an office as that of *teachers* in the Christian church, and therefore, doubtless will allow that something or other is proper

and peculiar to that office, or some business of *teaching* that belongs to it, that does not belong as much to others as to them.

If there be any way of teaching, that is peculiar to that office, then for others to take that upon them, is to invade the office of a minister; which doubtless is very sinful, and is often so represented in scripture. But the great difficulty is to settle the bounds, and to tell exactly, how far laymen may go, and when they exceed their limits; which is a matter of so much difficulty, that I do not wonder if many in their zeal have transgressed. The two ways of teaching and exhorting, the one of which ought ordinarily to be left to ministers, and the other of which may and ought to be practised by the people, may be expressed by those two names of *preaching*, and *exhorting* in a way of *Christian conversation*.... But then a great deal of difficulty and controversy arises to determine what is *preaching*, and what is *Christian conversation*. However, I will humbly offer my thoughts concerning this subject of lay exhorting, as follows.

I. The common people in exhorting one another ought not to clothe themselves with the like authority with that which is proper for ministers. There is a certain authority that ministers have, and should exercise in teaching, as well as governing the flock. Teaching is spoken of in scripture as an act of authority, 1 Tim. ii. 12. In order to a man's preaching, special authority must be committed to him. Rom. x. 15. "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" Ministers in this work of teaching and exhorting are clothed with authority, as Christ's messengers, (Mal. ii. 7.) and as representing him, and so speaking in his name, and in his stead, 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20. And it seems to be the most honorable thing that belongs to the office of a minister of the gospel, that to him is committed the word of reconciliation, and that he has power to preach the gospel, as Christ's messenger, and speaking in his name. The apostle seems to speak of it as such, 1 Cor. i. 16, 17. Ministers therefore in the exercise of this power, may clothe themselves with authority in speaking, or may teach others in an authoritative manner. Tit. ii. 15. "These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authori-

ity: Let no man despise thee." But the common people in exhorting one another, ought not thus to exhort in an authoritative manner. There is a great deal of difference between teaching as a father amongst a company of children, and counselling in a *brotherly* way, as the children may kindly counsel and admonish one another. Those that are mere brethren, ought not to assume authority in exhorting, though one may be better, and have more experience than another. Laymen ought not to exhort as though they were the ambassadors or messengers of Christ, as ministers do; nor should they exhort and warn and charge *in his name*, according to the ordinary import of such an expression, when applied to teaching: Indeed in one sense, a Christian ought to do every thing he does in religion in the name of Christ, i. e. he ought to act in a dependence on him as his head and mediator, and do all for his glory: But the expression as it is usually understood when applied to teaching or exhorting, is speaking in Christ's stead, and as having a message from him.

Persons may clothe themselves with authority in speaking, either by the authoritative words they make use of, or in the manner, and authoritative air of their speaking: Though some may think that this latter is a matter of indifferency, or at least of small importance, yet there is indeed a great deal in it: A person may go much out of his place, and be guilty of a great degree of assuming, in the manner of his speaking those words, which as they might be spoken, might be proper for him: The same words spoken in a different manner, may express what is very diverse: Doubtless there may be as much hurt in the manner of a person's speaking, as there may in his looks; but the wise man tells us, that *an high look is an abomination to the Lord*, Prov. xxi. 4. Again, a man may clothe himself with authority, in the circumstances under which he speaks; as for instance, if he sets himself up as a *public teacher*. Here I would have it observed, that I do not suppose that a person is guilty of this, merely because he speaks in the hearing of many: Persons may speak, and speak only in a way of conversation, and yet speak in the hearing of a great number, as they often do in their common con-

versation about temporal things, at feasts and entertainments, where women as well as others, do converse freely together about worldly things, in the hearing of a considerable number; and it may happen to be in the hearing of a great number, and yet without offence: And if their conversation on such occasions should turn on spiritual things, and they should speak as freely and openly, I do not see why it would not be as harmless. Nor do I think that if besides a great number's being present, persons speak with a very earnest and loud voice, this is for them to set up themselves as public teachers, if they do it from no contrivance or premeditated design, or as purposely directing themselves to a congregation or multitude, and not speaking to any that are composed to the solemnity of any public service; but speaking in the time of conversation, or a time when all do freely converse one with another, they express what they then feel, directing themselves to none but those that are near them, and fall in their way, speaking in that earnest and pathetical manner, to which the subject they are speaking of, and the affecting sense of their souls naturally leads them, and as it were constrains them: I say that for persons to do thus, though many happen to hear them, yet it does not appear to me to be a setting themselves up as public teachers: Yea, if this be added to these other circumstances, that all this happens to be in a meeting house; I do not think that merely its being in such a place, much alters the case, provided the solemnity of public service and divine ordinances be over, and the solemn assembly broke up, and some stay in the house for mutual religious conversation; provided also that they speak in no authoritative way, but in an humble manner, becoming their degree and station, though they speak very earnestly and pathetically.

Indeed modesty might, in ordinary cases, restrain some persons, as women, and those that are young, from so much as speaking, when a great number are present; at least when some of those present are much their superiors, unless they are spoken to; and yet the case may be so extraordinary, as fully to warrant it. If something very extraordinary hap-

pens to persons, or if they are in extraordinary circumstances; as if a person be struck with lightning, in the midst of a great company, or if he lies a dying, it appears to none any violation of modesty, for him to speak freely, before those that are much his superiors. I have seen some women and children in such circumstances, on religious accounts, that it has appeared to me no more a transgressing the laws of humility and modesty, for them to speak freely, let who will be present than if they were dying.

But then may a man be said to set up himself as a public teacher, when he in a set speech, of design, directs himself to a multitude, either in the meeting house or elsewhere, as looking that they should compose themselves to attend to what he has to say; and much more when this is a contrived and premeditated thing, without any thing like a constraint, by any extraordinay sense or affection that he is then under; and more still, when meetings are appointed on purpose to hear lay persons exhort, and they take it as their business to be speakers while they expect that others should come, and compose themselves, and attend as hearers; when private Christians take it upon them in private meetings, to act as the masters or presidents of the assembly, and accordingly from time to time to teach and exhort the rest, this has the appearance of authoritative teaching.

When private Christians, that are no more than mere brethren, exhort and admonish one another, it ought to be in an humble manner, rather by way of entreaty than with authority; and the more according as the station of persons is lower. Thus it becomes women, and those that are young, ordinarily to be at a greater distance from any appearance of authority in speaking than others: Thus much at least is evident by that in 1 Tim. ii. 9, 11, 12.

That lay persons ought not to exhort one another as clothed with authority, is a general rule; but it cannot justly be supposed to extend to heads of families in their own families. Every Christian family is a little church, and the heads of it are its authoritative teachers and governors. Nor can it extend to schoolmasters among their scholars; and some other

cases might perhaps be mentioned, that ordinary discretion will distinguish, where a man's circumstances do properly clothe him with authority, and render it fit and suitable for him to counsel and admonish others in an authoritative manner.

2. No man but only a minister that is duly appointed to that sacred calling, ought to follow teaching and exhorting *as a calling*; or so as to neglect that which is his *proper calling*.... An having the office of a teacher in the church of God implies two things:

1. A being invested with the *authority* of a teacher; and,

2. A being called to the *business* of a teacher, to make it the business of his life.

Therefore, that man that is not a minister, that takes either of these upon him, invades the office of a minister. Concerning assuming the authority of a minister I have spoken already. But if a layman does not assume authority in his teaching, yet if he forsakes his proper calling, or doth so at least in a great measure, and spends his time in going about from house to house, to counsel and exhort, he goes beyond his line, and violates Christian rules. Those that have the office of teachers or exhorters, have it for their calling, and should make it their business, as a business proper to their office; and none should make it their business but such.... Rom. xii. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8. "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the proportion of faith. For as we have many members, in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we being many, are one body in Christ. He that teacheth, let him wait on teaching, or he that exhorteth, on exhortation." 1 Cor. xii. 29. "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?" 1 Cor. vii. 20. "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." 1 Thes. iv. 11. "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you."

It will be a very dangerous thing for laymen, in either of these respects, to invade the office of a minister; if this be common among us we shall be in danger of having a stop put to the work of God, and the ark's turning aside from us, before it comes to mount Zion, and of God's making a breach upon us; as of old there was an unhappy stop put to the joy of the congregation of Israel, in bringing up the ark of God, because others carried it besides the Levites: And therefore, David, when the error was found out, says, 1 Chron. xv. 2. "None ought to carry the ark of God, but the Levites only; for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him forever." And because one presumed to touch the ark that was not of the sons of Aaron, therefore, the Lord made a breach upon them, and covered their day of rejoicing with a cloud in his anger.

Before I dismiss this head of lay exhorting, I would take notice of three things relating to it, upon which there ought to be a restraint.

1. Speaking in the time of the solemn worship of God, as public prayer, singing, or preaching, or administration of the sacrament of the holy supper; or any duty of social worship: This should not be allowed. I know it will be said, that in some cases, when persons are exceedingly affected, they cannot help it; and I believe so too: But then I also believe, and know by experience, that there are several things that contribute to that inability, besides merely and absolutely the sense of divine things they have upon their hearts. Custom and example, or the thing's being allowed, have such an influence, that they actually help to make it impossible for persons under strong affections to avoid speaking. If it was disallowed, and persons at the time that they were thus disposed to break out, had this apprehension, that it would be a very unbecoming, shocking thing for them so to do, it would be a help to them, as to their ability to avoid it: Their inability arises from their strong and vehement disposition; and so far as that disposition is from a good principle, it would be weakened by the coming in of this thought to their minds, viz. "What I am going to do, will be for the dishonor of Christ

and religion: And so that inward vehemence, that pushed them forward to speak, would fall, and they would be enabled to avoid it. This experience confirms.

2. There ought to be a moderate restraint on the loudness of persons talking under high affections; for if there be not, it will grow natural and unavoidable for persons to be louder and louder, without any increase of their inward sense; until it becomes natural to them, at last, to scream and hallow to almost every one they see in the streets, when they are much affected: But this is certainly a thing very improper, and what has no tendency to promote religion. The man Christ Jesus when he was upon earth, had doubtless as great a sense of the infinite greatness and importance of eternal things, and the worth of souls, as any have now a days; but there is not the least appearance in his history, of his taking any such course, or manner of exhorting others.

3. There should also be some restraint on the abundance of persons' talk, under strong affections; for if persons give themselves an unbounded liberty, to talk just so much as they feel an inclination to, they will increase and abound more and more in talk, beyond the proportion of their sense or affection; until at length it will become ineffectual on those that hear them, and by the commonness of their abundant talk, they will defeat their own end.

One thing more, I would take notice of before I conclude this part, is the mismanagement that has been in some places of the duty of singing praises to God. I believe it to have been one fruit of the extraordinary degrees of the sweet and joyful influences of the Spirit of God that have been lately given, that there has appeared such a disposition to abound in that duty, and frequently to fall into this divine exercise; not only in appointed solemn meetings, but when Christians occasionally meet together at each other's houses. But the mismanagement I have respect to, is the getting into a way of performing it, without almost any appearance of that reverence and solemnity with which all visible, open acts of divine worship ought to be attended; it may be two or three in a room singing hymns of praise to God, others that are present

talking at the same time, others about their work, with little more appearance of regard to what is doing, than if some were only singing a common song, for their amusement and diversion. There is danger, if such things are continued, of its coming to that by degrees, that a mere nothing be made of this duty, to the great violation of the third commandment.... Let Christians abound as much as they will in this holy, heavenly exercise, in God's house and in their own houses; but when it is performed, let it be performed as an holy act, wherein they have immediately and visibly to do with God.... When any social open act of devotion, or solemn worship of God is performed, God should be reverenced as visibly present, by those that are present. As we would not have the ark of God depart from us, nor provoke God to make a breach upon us, we should take heed that we handle the ark with reverence.

With respect to companies singing in the streets, going to, or coming from, the place of public worship, I would humbly offer my thoughts in the following particulars.

1. The rule of Christ concerning *putting new wine into old bottles*, does undoubtedly take place in things of this nature, supposing it to be a thing that in itself is good, but not essential, and not particularly enjoined or forbidden. For things, so very new and uncommon, and of so open and public a nature, to be suddenly introduced and set up and practised, in many parts of the country, without the matter's being so much as first proposed to any public consideration, or giving any opportunity for the people of God to weigh the matter, or to consider any reasons that might be offered to support it, is putting new wine into old bottles with a witness; as if it were with no other design than to burst them directly. Nothing else can be expected to be the consequence of this, than uproar and confusion, and great offence, and unhappy mischievous disputes, even among the children of God themselves: Not that that which is good in itself, and is new, ought to be forborn, until there is nobody that will dislike it; but it ought to be forborn until the visible church of God is so prepared for it, at least, that there is a probability that it will not do more

hurt than good, or hinder the work of God more than promote it; as is most evident from Christ's rule, and the apostles' practice. If it be brought in, when the country is so unprepared, that the shock and surprise on persons' minds, and the contention and prejudice against religion, that it is like to be an occasion of, will do more to hinder religion, than the practice of it is like to do to promote it, then the fruit is picked before it is ripe. And indeed, such an hasty endeavor to introduce such an innovation, supposing it to be good in itself, is the likeliest way to retard the effectual introduction of it; it will hinder its being extensively introduced, much more than it will promote it, and so will defeat its own end. But,

2. As to the thing itself, if a considerable part of a congregation have occasion to go in company together to a place of public worship, and they should join together in singing praises to God, as they go, I confess, that after long consideration, and endeavoring to view the thing every way, with the utmost diligence and impartiality I am capable of, I cannot find any valid objection against it. As to the common objection from Mat. vi. 5. "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men;" it is strong against a single person's singing in the streets, or in the meetinghouse, by himself, as offering to God personal, worship but as it is brought against a considerable company, their thus publicly worshipping God, it appears to me to have no weight at all; to be sure it is of no more force against a company's thus praising God in the streets, than against their praising him in the synagogue or meetinghouse, for the streets and the synagogues are both put together in these words of our Saviour, as parellel in the case that he had respect to. It is evident that Christ speaks of personal, and not public worship. If to sing in the streets be ostentatious, then it must be because it is a public place, and it cannot be done there without being very open; but it is no more public than the synagogue or meetinghouse is when full of people. Some worship is in its nature private, as that which is proper to particular persons, or families, or

private societies, and has respect to their particular concerns: But that which I now speak of, is performed under no other notion than a part of God's public worship without any relation to any private, separate society, or any chosen or picked number, and in which every visible Christian has equal liberty to join, if it be convenient for him, and he has a disposition, as in the worship that is performed in the meetinghouse.

When persons are going to the house of public worship, to serve God there with the assembly of his people, they are upon no other design than that of putting public honor upon God, that is the business they go from home upon, and even in their walking the streets on this errand, they appear in a public act of respect to God; and therefore if they go in company with public praise, it is not a being public when they ought to be private. It is one part of the beauty of public worship, that it be *very public*; the more public it is, the more open honor it puts upon God; and especially is it beautiful in that part of public worship, viz. *public praise*: For the very notion of public praising of God, is to declare abroad his glory, to publish his praise, to make it known, and proclaim it aloud, as is evident by innumerable expressions of scripture. It is fit that God's honor should not be concealed but made known in the great congregation, and proclaimed before the sun, and upon the housetops, before kings, and all nations, and that his praises should be heard to the utmost ends of the earth.

I suppose none will condemn singing God's praises, merely because it is performed in the open air, and not in a close place: And if it may be performed by a company in the open air, doubtless they may do it moving, as well as standing still. So the children of Israel praised God, when they went to mount Zion, with the ark of God; and so the multitude praised Christ, when they entered with him into Jerusalem, a little before his passion; and so the children of Israel were wont from year to year, to go up to Jerusalem, when they went in companies, from all parts of the land, three times in the year, when they often used to manifest the engagedness of their minds, by travelling all night, and manifested their

joy and gladness, by singing praises, with great decency and beauty, as they went towards God's holy mountain; as is evident by Isa. xxx. 29, "Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept, and gladness of heart; as when one goeth with a pipe, to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty one of Israel." And Psal. xlii. 4, "When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me; for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day." Psal. c. 4. "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise." When God's people are going to his house, the occasion is so joyful to a Christian in a lively frame, (the language of whose heart is, *Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord*, and who is glad when it is so said to him) that the duty of singing praises seems to be peculiarly beautiful on such an occasion. So that if the state of the country was ripe for it, and it should be so that there should be frequent occasions for a considerable part of a congregation to go together to the places of public worship, and there was in other respects a proportionable appearance of fervency of devotion, it appears to me that it would be ravishingly beautiful, if such things were practised all over the land, and would have a great tendency to enliven, animate and rejoice the souls of God's saints, and greatly to propagate vital religion. I believe the time is coming when the world will be full of such things.

3. It seems to me to be requisite that there should be the consent of the governing part of the worshipping societies, to which persons have joined themselves, and of which they own themselves a part, in order to the introducing of things in public worship, so new and uncommon, and not essential, nor particularly commanded, into the places where those worshipping societies belong: The peace and union of such societies seem to require it; seeing they have voluntarily united themselves to these worshipping societies, to that end, that they might be one in the affairs of God's public worship, and oblige themselves in covenant to act as brethren and mutual assistants, and members of one body, in these affairs, and

all are hereby naturally and necessarily led to be concerned with one another, in matters of religion and God's worship; and seeing that this is a part of the public worship, and worship that must be performed from time to time in the view of the whole, being performed at a time when they are meeting together for mutual assistance in worship, and therefore that which all must unavoidably be in some measure concerned in, so at least as to shew their approbation and consent, or open dislike and separation from them in it; I say, it being thus, charity and a regard to the union and peace of such societies, seems to require a consent of the governing part, in order to the introducing of any thing of this nature; (unless they think those societies unworthy that they should be joined to them any longer, and so first renounce them, as the worshipping societies of which they are members.) Certainly if we are of the spirit of the Apostle Paul, and have his discretion, we shall not set up any such practice without it: He, for the sake of peace, conformed, in things wherein he was not particularly forbidden, to the Jews, when among them; and so when among those that were without the law, conformed to them, wherein he might. To be sure those go beyond proper limits, who, coming from abroad, do immediately of their own heads, in a strange place, set up such a new and uncommon practice, among a people.

In introducing any thing of this nature among a people, their minister especially ought to be consulted, and his voice taken, as long as he is owned for their minister. Ministers are pastors of worshipping societies, and their heads and guides in the affairs of public worship. They are called in scripture *those that rule over them*, and their people are commanded *to obey them, because they watch for their souls as those that must give account.* If it belongs to these shepherds and rulers to direct and guide the flock in any thing at all, it belongs to them so to do in the circumstantials of their public worship.

Thus I have taken particular notice of many of those things that have appeared to me to be amiss, in the management of our religious concerns, relating to the present revival of relig-

lon, and have taken liberty freely to express my thoughts upon them. Upon the whole it appears manifest to me, that things have as yet, never been set a going in their right channel; if they had, and means had been blessed in proportion as they have been now, this work would have so prevailed, as before this time to have carried all before it, and have triumphed over Newengland as its conquest.

The devil in driving things to these extremes, besides the present hindrance of the work of God, has, I believe, had in view, a twofold mischief hereafter, in the issue of things; one with respect to those that are more cold in religion; to carry things to such an extreme, that people in general, at length, having their eyes opened, by the great excess, and seeing that things must needs be wrong, he might take the advantage to tempt them entirely to reject the whole work, as being all nothing but delusion and distraction. And another is with respect to those that have been very warm and zealous, of God's own children, that have been out of the way, to sink them down in unbelief and darkness. The time is coming, I doubt not, when the bigger part of them will be convinced of their errors; and then probably the devil will take advantage to lead them into a dreadful wilderness, and to puzzle and confound them about their own experiences, and the experiences of others; and to make them to doubt of many things that they ought not to doubt of, and even to tempt them with atheistical thoughts. I believe if all true Christians all over the land, should now at once have their eyes opened, fully to see all their errors, it would seem for the present to damp religion: The dark thoughts, that it would at first be an occasion of, and the inward doubts, difficulties and conflicts that would rise in their souls, would deaden their lively affections and joys, and would cause an appearance of a present decay of religion. But yet it would do God's saints great good in their latter end; it would fit them for more spiritual and excellent experiences, more humble and heavenly love, and unmixed joys, and would greatly tend to a more powerful, extensive and durable prevalence of vital piety.

I do not know but we shall be in danger by and by, after our eyes are fully opened to see our errors, to go to contrary extremes. The devil has driven the pendulum far beyond its proper point of rest; and when he has carried it to the utmost length that he can, and it begins by its own weight to swing back, he probably will set in, and drive it with the utmost fury the other way; and so give us no rest; and if possible prevent our settling in a proper medium. What a poor, blind, weak and miserable creature is man, at his best estate! We are like poor helpless sheep; the devil is too subtle for us: What is our strength! What is our wisdom! How ready are we to go astray! How easily are we drawn aside, into innumerable snares, while we in the mean time are bold and confident, and doubt not but that we are right and safe! We are foolish sheep, in the midst of subtle serpents and cruel wolves, and do not know it. Oh! how unfit are we to be left to ourselves! And how much do we stand in need of the wisdom, the power, the condescension, patience forgiveness and gentleness of our good shepherd!

PART V.

Shewing positively, what ought to be done to promote this WORK.

IN considering of means and methods for promoting this glorious work of God, I have already observed, in some instances wherein there has been needless objecting and complaining, and have also taken notice of many things amiss, that ought to be amended: I now proceed in the

Third and last place, to shew positively, what ought to be done, or what courses (according to my humble opinion) ought to be taken to promote this work. The obligations that all are under, with one consent, to do their utmost, and the great

danger of neglecting it, were observed before. I hope that some, upon reading what was said under that head, will be ready to say, What shall we do? To such readers I would now offer my thoughts, in answer to such an inquiry.

And that which I think we ought to set ourselves about in the first place, is to remove stumbling blocks. When God is revealed as about to come, gloriously to set up his kingdom in the world, this is proclaimed, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make strait in the desert an high way for our God*, Isa. xl. 3.... And again, Isa. lvii. 14. "Cast ye up, cast ye up; prepare the way; take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people." And chap. lxii. 10. "Go through, go through the gates; prepare you the way of the people; cast up, cast up the high way; gather out the stones."

And in order to this, there must be a great deal done at confessing of faults, on both sides: For undoubtedly many and great are the faults that have been committed, in the jangling and confusions, and mixtures of light and darkness, that have been of late. There is hardly any duty more contrary to our corrupt dispositions, and mortifying to the pride of man; but it must be done. Repentance of faults is, in a peculiar manner, a proper duty, when the kingdom of heaven is at hand, or when we especially expect or desire that it should come; as appears by John the Baptist's preaching. And if God does now loudly call upon us to repent, then he also calls upon us to make proper manifestations of our repentance. I am persuaded that those that have openly opposed this work, or have from time to time spoken lightly of it, cannot be excused in the sight of God, without openly confessing their fault therein; especially if they be ministers. If they have any way, either directly or indirectly, opposed the work, or have so behaved, in their public performances or private conversation, as has prejudiced the minds of their people against the work, if hereafter they shall be convinced of the goodness and divinity of what they have opposed, they ought by no means to palliate the matter, and excuse themselves, and pretend that they always thought so, and that it was only such and such imprudences that they objected against; but they ought openly to

declare their conviction, and condemn themselves for what they have done; for it is Christ that they have spoken against, in speaking lightly of, and prejudicing others against this work; yea, worse than that, it is the Holy Ghost. And though they have done it ignorantly, and in unbelief, yet when they find out who it is that they have opposed, undoubtedly God will hold them bound publicly to confess it.

And on the other side, if those that have been zealous to promote the work, have in any of the forementioned instances, openly gone much out of the way, and done that which is contrary to Christian rules, whereby they have openly injured others, or greatly violated good order, and so done that which has wounded religion, they must publicly confess it, and humble themselves, as they would gather out the stones, and prepare the way of God's people. They who have laid great stumbling blocks in others way, by their *open transgression*, are bound to remove them, by their *open repentance*.

Some probably will be ready to object against this, that the opposers will take advantage by this to behave themselves insolently, and to insult both them and religion. And indeed, to the shame of some, they have taken advantage by such things; as of the good spirit that Mr. Whitefield shewed in his retractations, and some others. But if there are some imbittered enemies of religion, that stand ready to improve every thing to its disadvantage, yet that ought not to hinder doing an enjoined Christian duty; though it be in the manifestation of humility and repentance, after a fault openly committed. To stand it out, in a visible impenitence of a real fault, to avoid such an inconvenience, is to do evil, to prevent evil. And besides, the danger of an evil consequence is much greater on the other side: To commit sin, and then stand in it, is what will give the enemy the greatest advantage. For Christians to act like Christians, in openly humbling themselves, when they have openly offended, in the end brings the greatest honor to Christ and religion; and in this way are persons most likely to have God appear for them.

Again, at such a day as this, God does especially call his people to the exercise of extraordinary meekness and mutual

forbearance: For at such a time, Christ appears as it were coming in his kingdom, which calls for great moderation in our behavior towards all men; as is evident, Phil. iv. 5. "Let your moderation be known unto all men: The Lord is at hand." The awe of the divine majesty that appears present or approaching, should dispose us to it, and deter us from the contrary. For us to be judging one another, and behaving with fierceness and bitterness, one towards another, when he who is the searcher of all hearts, to whom we must all give an account, appears so remarkably present, is exceeding unsuitable. Our business, at such a time, should be at home, searching ourselves, and condemning ourselves, and taking heed to our own behavior. If there be glorious prosperity to the church of God approaching, those that are the most meek, will have the largest share in it: For when Christ *rides forth, in his glory and his majesty*, it is *because of truth, meekness and righteousness*, Psal. xlv. 3, 4. And when God remarkably *arises, to execute judgment*, it is *to save all the meek of the earth*, Psal. lxxvi. 9. And it is *the meek*, that *shall increase their joy in the Lord*, Isa. xxix. 19. And when the time comes, that God will give this lower world into the hands of his saints, it is *the meek that shall inherit the earth*, Psal. xxxvii. 11, and Mat. v. 9. "But with the froward, God will shew himself unsavory."

Those therefore, that have been zealous for this work, and have greatly erred and been injurious with their zeal, ought not to be treated with bitterness. There is abundant reason to think, that most of them are the dear children of God, for whom Christ died; and therefore, that they will see their error. As to those things, wherein we see them to be in an error, we have reason to say of them as the apostle, Philip. iii. 15. "If any are otherwise minded, God shall reveal this unto them." Their errors should not be made use of by us, so much to excite indignation towards them, but should influence all of us, that hope that we are the children of God, to humble ourselves, and become more entirely dependent on the Lord Jesus Christ, when we see those, that are God's own people,

so ready to go astray. And those ministers that have been judged, and injuriously dealt with, will do the part of Christ's disciples, not to judge and revile again, but to receive such injuries with meekness and forbearance, and making a good improvement of them, more strictly examining their hearts and ways, and committing themselves to God. This will be the way to have God vindicate them in his providence, if they belong to him. We have not yet seen the end of things; nor do we know who will be most vindicated, and honored of God, in the issue. Eccles. vii. 8. "Better is the end of a thing, than the beginning thereof; and the patient in spirit, is better than the proud in spirit."

Contrary to this mutual meekness, is each party's stigmatizing one another with odious names; as is done in many parts of Newengland: Which tends greatly to widen and perpetuate the breach. Such distinguishing names of reproach, do as it were divide us into two armies, separated, and drawn up in battle array, ready to fight one with another; which greatly hinders the work of God.

And as such an extraordinary time as this, does especially require of us the exercise of a great deal of forbearance, *one towards another*; so there is peculiarly requisite in God's people, the exercise of great patience, in waiting on God, under any special difficulties and disadvantages they may be under, as to the means of grace. The beginning of a revival of religion will naturally and necessarily be attended with a great many difficulties of this nature; many parts of the reviving church will, for a while, be under great disadvantages, by reason of what remains of the old disease, of a general corruption of the visible church. We cannot expect that, after a long time of degeneracy and depravity, in the state of things in the church, things should all come to rights at once; it must be a work of time: And for God's people to be over hasty and violent, in such a case, being resolved to have every thing rectified at once, or else forcibly to deliver themselves, by breaches and separations, is the way to hinder things coming to rights, as they otherwise would, and to keep them back, and the way to break all in pieces. Not but that the case may be such, the

difficulty may be so intolerable, as to allow of no delay, and God's people cannot continue in the state wherein they were, without violations of absolute commands of God. But otherwise, though the difficulty may be very great, another course should be taken. God's people should have their recourse directly to the throne of grace, to represent their difficulties before the great shepherd of the sheep, that has the care of all the affairs of his church; and when they have done, they should wait patiently upon him: If they do so, they may expect that in his time, he will appear for their deliverance: But, if instead of that, they are impatient, and take the work into their own hands, they will bewray their want of faith, and will dishonor God, and cannot have such reason to hope that Christ will appear for them, as they have desired, but have reason to fear, that he will leave them to manage their affairs for themselves, as well as they can: When otherwise, if they had waited on Christ patiently, continuing still instant in prayer, they might have had him appearing for them, much more effectually to deliver them. *He that believeth shall not make haste*; and it is for those that are found patiently waiting on the Lord, under difficulties, that he will especially appear, when he comes to do great things for his church, as is evident by Isa. xxx. 18, and chap. xl. at the latter end, and xlix. 23, and Psal. xxxvii. 9, and many other places.

I have somewhere, not long since, met with an exposition of those words of the sponse, that we have several times repeated in the book of Canticles, *I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please*, which is the only satisfying exposition that ever I met with; which was to this purpose, viz. that when the church of God is under great difficulties, and in distress, and Christ does not appear for her help, but seems to neglect her, as though he were asleep, God's people, or the daughters of Jerusalem, in such a case, should not show an hasty spirit; and not having patience to wait for Christ to awake for their help, until his time comes, take indirect courses for their own deliverance, and use violent means for their escape, before Christ appears to open the door for them; and so as it were, *stir up, and*

awake Christ, before his time. When the church is in distress, and God seems not to appear for her in his providence, he is very often represented in scripture, as being asleep; as Christ was asleep in the ship, when the disciples were tossed by the storm, and the ship covered with waves: And God's appearing afterwards for his people's help, is represented as his awaking out of sleep. Psal. vii. 6, and xxxv. 23, and xliv. 23, and lix. 4, and lxxiii. 20. Christ has an appointed time for his thus awaking out of sleep: And his people ought to wait upon him; and not, in an impatient fit, stir him up, before his time. It is worthy to be observed how strict this charge is, given to the daughters of Jerusalem, which is repeated three times over in the book of Canticles, chap. ii. 7, and iii. 5, and viii. 4. In the 2d chapter and six first verses, is represented the supports Christ gives his church, while she is in a suffering state, *as the lily among thorns*: In the 7th verse is represented her patience in waiting for Christ, to appear for her deliverance, when she charges the daughters of Jerusalem, not to stir up, nor awake her love until he please, *by the roes, and the hinds of the field*; which are creatures of a gentle, harmless nature, are not beasts of prey, do not devour one another, do not fight with their enemies, but fly from them; and are of a pleasant, loving nature, Prov. v. 19. In the next verse, we see the church's success, in this way of waiting under sufferings, with meekness and patience; Christ soon awakes, speedily appears, and swiftly comes: *The voice of my beloved! Behold, he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills!*

What has been mentioned hitherto, has relation to the behavior we are obliged to, as we would prevent the hindrances of the work; but besides these, there are things that must be done, more directly to advance it. And here, it concerns every one, in the first place, to look into his own heart, and see to it that he be a partaker of the benefits of the work himself, and that it be promoted in his own soul. Now is a most glorious opportunity for the good of souls. It is manifestly, with respect to a time of great revival of religion in the world, that we have that gracious, earnest and moving invitation pro-

claimed, in the 55th of Isaiah. *Ho, every one that thirsteth!* &c. as is evident by what precedes in the foregoing chapter, and what follows in the close of this. Here, in the 6th verse, it is said, "Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call upon him, while he is near. And it is with special reference to such a time, that Christ proclaims as he does, Rev. xxi. 6. "I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely." And chap. xxii. 17. "And the Spirit and the bride say, come; and let him that heareth say, come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And it seems to be with reference to such a time, which is typified by the *feast of tabernacles*, that Jesus, at that feast, stood and cried, as we have an account, John vii. 37, 38. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." And it is with special reference to God's freeness and readiness to bestow grace at such a time, that it is said in Isa. lx. 11, of the spiritual *Jerusalem, thy gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night.*

And though I judge not those that have opposed this work, and would not have others judge them, yet, if any such shall happen to read this treatise, I would take the liberty to entreat them to leave off concerning themselves so much about others, and look into their own souls, and see to it that they are the subjects of a true, saving work of the Spirit of God. If they have reason to think they never have been, or it be but a very doubtful hope that they have, then how can they have any heart to be busily and fiercely engaged about the mistakes, and the supposed false hopes of others? And I would now beseech those that have hitherto been something inclining to Arminian principles, seriously to weigh the matter with respect to this work, and consider, whether, if the scriptures are the word of God, the work that has been described in the first part of this treatise, must not needs be, as to the substance of it, the work of God, and the flourishing of that religion, that is taught by Christ and his apostles; and whether any good me-

dium can be found, where a man can rest, with any stability, between owning this work, and being a Deist; and also to consider whether or no, if it be indeed so, that this be the work of God, it does not entirely overthrow their scheme of religion; and therefore, whether it does not infinitely concern them, as they would be partakers of eternal salvation, to relinquish their scheme. Now is a good time for Arminians to change their principles. I would now, as one of the friends of this work, humbly invite them to come and join with us, and be on our side; and if I had the authority of Moses, I would say to them as he did to Hobab, Numb. x. 29. "We are journeying unto the place, of which the Lord said, I will give it you; come thou with us; and we will do thee good: For the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

As the benefit and advantage of the good improvement of such a season, is extraordinary great; so the danger of neglecting, and misimproving it, is proportionably great. It is abundantly evident by the scripture, that as a time of great outpouring of the Spirit, is a time of great favor to those that are partakers of the blessing; so it is always a time of remarkable vengeance to others. So in Isa. lxi. 2, the same that is called, *the acceptable year of the Lord*, is called also, *the day of vengeance of our God*. So it was amongst the Jews, in the apostles' days: The apostle in 2 Cor. vi. 2, says of that time, that it was *the accepted time, and day of salvation*; and Christ says of the same time, Luke xxi. 22, "These are the days of vengeance." At the same time that the blessings of the kingdom of heaven were given to some, there was an *axe laid at the root of the trees, that those that did not bear fruit, might be hewn down, and cast into the fire*, Mat. iii. 9, 10, 11. Then was glorified, both the goodness and severity of God, in a remarkable manner. Rom. xi. 22. The harvest and the vintage go together: At the same time that the earth is reaped, and God's elect are gathered into the garner of God, *the angel that has power over fire, thrusts in his sickle, and gathers the cluster of the vine of the earth, and casts it into the great wine press of the wrath of God*, Rev. xiv. at the latter end. So it is foretold, that at the beginning of the glorious times of the

Christian church, at the same time that *the hand of the Lord is known towards his servants, so shall his indignation, towards his enemies*, Isa. lxvi. 14. So when that glorious morning shall appear, wherein *the sun of righteousness shall arise, to the elect, with healing in his wings, the day shall burn as an oven to the wicked*, Mal. iv. 1, 2, 3. There is no time like such a time, for the increase of guilt, and treasuring up wrath, and desperate hardening of the heart, if men stand it out; which is the most awful judgment, and fruit of divine wrath, that can be inflicted on any mortal. So that a time of great grace, and pouring out of the Spirit, and the fruits of divine mercy, is evermore also, a time of great outpouring of something else, viz. divine vengeance, on those that neglect and misimprove such a season.

The state of the present revival of religion, has an awful aspect upon those that are advanced in years. The work has been chiefly amongst those that are young; and comparatively, but few others have been made partakers of it. And indeed, it has commonly been so, when God has begun any great work, for the revival of his church; he has taken the young people, and has cast off the old and stiff necked generation. There was a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God, on the children of Israel in the wilderness, on the younger generation, *their little ones, that they said, should be a prey*, the generation that entered into Canaan, with Joshua; which is evident by many things in scripture. That generation seems to have been the most excellent generation that ever was in the church of Israel. There is no generation of which there is so much good, and so little hurt spoken in scripture; as might be shewn, if it would not be too long. In that generation, that were under twenty years, when they went out of Egypt, was that *kindness of youth*, and *love of espousals*, spoken of, Jer. ii. 2, 3. But the old generation were passed by, and remained obstinate and stiff necked, were always murmuring, and would not be convinced by all God's wonderous works that they beheld. God by his awful judgments that he executed in the wilderness, and the affliction that the people suffered there, convinced and humbled the younger generation,

and fitted them for great mercy; as is evident by Deut. ii. 14, but he destroyed the old generation; *he swore in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest, and their carcases fell in the wilderness:* When it was a time of great mercy, and pouring out of God's Spirit on their children, it was remarkably a day of vengeance unto them; as appears by the 90th Psalm. Let the old generation in this land, take warning from hence, and take heed that they do not refuse to be convinced, by all God's wonders that he works before their eyes, and that they do not continue forever objecting, murmuring and cavilling, against the work of God, least, while God is bringing their children into a land flowing with milk and honey, he should swear in his wrath concerning them, that their carcases shall fall in the wilderness.

So when God had a design of great mercy to the Jews, in bringing them out of the Babylonish captivity, and returning them to their own land, there was a blessed outpouring of the Spirit upon them in Babylon, to bring them to deep conviction and repentance, and to a spirit of prayer to cry earnestly to God for mercy; which is often spoken of by the prophets: But it was not upon the old generation, that were carried captive. The captivity continued just long enough, for that perverse generation to waste away and die in their captivity; at least those of them that were adult persons, when carried captive. The old generation, and heads of families were exceeding obstinate, and would not hearken to the earnest, repeated warnings of the prophet Jeremiah; but he had greater success among the young people; as appears by Jer. vi. 10, 11. "To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: Behold the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it. Therefore, I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in; I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of the young men together; for even the husband with the wife (i. e. the heads of families, and parents of these children) shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days."... Blessed be God! There are some of the elder people, that

have been made partakers of this work: And those that are most awakened, by these warnings of God's word, and the awful frowns of his providence, will be most likely to be made partakers hereafter. It infinitely concerns them to take heed to themselves, that they may be partakers of it; for how dreadful will it be to go to hell, after having spent so many years in doing nothing, but treasure up wrath.

But above all others whatsoever, does it concern us that are ministers, to see to it that we are partakers of this work, or that we have experience of the saving operations of the same spirit, that is now poured out on the land. How sorrowful and melancholy is the case, when it is otherwise! For one to stand at the head of a congregation of God's people, as representing Christ, and speaking in his stead, and to act the part of a shepherd and guide to a people, in such a state of things, when many are under great awakenings, and many are converted, and many of God's saints are filled with divine light, love and joy, and to undertake to instruct and lead them all, under all these various circumstances, and to be put to it, continually to play the hypocrite, and force the airs of a saint in preaching, and from time to time, in private conversation, and particular dealing with souls, to undertake to judge of their circumstances, to try to talk with those that come to him, as if he knew what they said; to try to talk with persons of experience, as if he knew how to converse with them, and had experience as well as they; to make others believe that he rejoices when others are converted, and to force a pleased and joyful countenance and manner of speech, when there is nothing in the heart, what sorrowful work is here! Oh! How miserably must such a person feel! What a wretched bondage and slavery is this! What pains and how much art must such a minister use to conceal himself! And how weak are his hands! Besides the infinite provocation of the most high God, and displeasure of his Lord and master, that he incurs, by continuing a secret enemy to him in his heart, in such circumstances. I think there is a great deal of reason, from the scripture, to conclude that no sort of men in the world, will be so low in hell, as ungodly ministers: Every thing that is

spoken of in scripture, as that which aggravates guilt, and heightens divine wrath, meets in them; however some particular persons, of other sorts, may be more guilty than some of these.

And what great disadvantages are unconverted ministers under, to oppose any irregularities, or imprudences, or intemperate zeal, that they may see in those that are the children of God, when they are conscious to themselves, that they have no zeal at all? If enthusiasm and wildness comes in like a flood, what poor, weak instruments are such ministers to withstand it? With what courage can they open their mouths, when they look inward, and consider how it is with them?

We that are ministers not only have need of some true experience of the saving influence of the Spirit of God upon our heart, but we need a double portion of the Spirit of God at such a time as this; we had need to be as full of light, as a glass is that is held out in the sun; and with respect to love and zeal, we had need at this day, to be like the angels that are a flame of fire. The state of the times extremely requires a fullness of the divine Spirit in ministers, and we ought to give ourselves no rest until we have obtained it. And in order to this, I should think ministers, above all persons, ought to be much in secret prayer and fasting, and also much in praying and fasting one with another. It seems to me it would be becoming the circumstances of the present day, if ministers in a neighborhood would often meet together, and spend days in fasting, and fervent prayer, among themselves, earnestly seeking for those extraordinary supplies of divine grace from heaven, that we need at this day: And also, if on their occasional visits one to another, instead of spending away their time in sitting and smoaking, and in diverting, or worldly, unprofitable conversation, telling news, and making their remarks on this and the other trifling subject, they would spend their time in praying together, and singing praises, and religious conference. How much do many of the common people shame many of us that are in the work of the ministry, in these respects? Surely we do not behave ourselves so much like Christian ministers, and the disciples and ambassa-

dors of Christ, as we ought to do. And while we condemn zealous persons for their doing so much at censuring ministers at this day, it ought not to be without deep reflections upon, and great condemnation of ourselves: For indeed, we do very much to provoke censoriousness, and lay a great temptation before others, to the sin of judging: And if we can prove that those that are guilty of it, do transgress the scripture rule, yet our indignation should be chiefly against ourselves.

Ministers, at this day in a special manner, should act as fellow helpers, in their great work. It should be seen that they are animated and engaged, and exert themselves with one heart and soul, and with united strength, to promote the present glorious revival of religion: And to that end should often meet together, and act in concert. And if it were a common thing in the country, for ministers to join in public exercises, and second one another in their preaching, I believe it would be of great service. I mean that ministers having consulted one another, as to the subjects of their discourses, before they go to the house of God, should there speak two or three of them going, in short discourses, as seconding each other, and earnestly enforcing each other's warnings and counsels. Only such an appearance of united zeal in ministers, would have a great tendency to awaken attention, and much to impress and animate the hearers; as has been found by experience, in some parts of the country.

Ministers should carefully avoid weakening one another's hands. And therefore every thing should be avoided, by which their interest with their people might be diminished, or their union with them broken. On the contrary, if ministers have not forfeited their acceptance in that character, in the visible church, by their doctrine or behavior, their brethren in the ministry ought studiously to endeavor to heighten the esteem and affection of their people towards them, that they may have no temptation to repent their admitting other ministers to come and preach in their pulpits.

Two things that are exceeding needful in ministers, as they would do any great matters, to advance the kingdom of Christ, are *zeal* and *resolution*. The influence and power of

these things, to bring to pass great effects, is greater than can well be imagined: A man of but an ordinary capacity, will do more with them, than one of ten times the parts and learning without them: More may be done with them, in a few days, or at least weeks, than can be done without them, in many years. Those that are possessed of these qualities, commonly carry the day, in almost all affairs. Most of the great things that have been done in the world of mankind, the great revolutions that have been accomplished in the kingdoms and empires of the earth, have been chiefly owing to these things. The very sight or appearance of a thoroughly engaged spirit, together with fearless courage and unyielding resolution, in any person, that has undertaken the managing any affair amongst mankind, goes a great way towards accomplishing the effect aimed at. It is evident that the appearance of these things in Alexander, did three times as much towards his conquering the world, as all the blows that he struck. And how much were the great things that Oliver Cromwel did, owing to these things? And the great things that Mr. Whitefield has done, every where, as he has run through the British dominions, (so far as they are owing to means) are very much owing to the appearance of these things, which he is eminently possessed of. When the people see these things apparently in a person, and to a great degree, it awes them, and has a commanding influence upon their minds; it seems to them that they must yield; they naturally fall before them, without standing to contest or dispute the matter; they are conquered as it were by surprize. But while we are cold and heartless, and only go on in a dull manner, in an old formal round, we shall never do any great matters. Our attempts, the appearance of such coldness and irresolution, will not so much as make persons think of yielding: They will hardly be sufficient to put it into their minds; and if it be put into their minds, the appearance of such indifference and cowardice, does as it were call for, and provoke opposition. Our misery is want of zeal and courage; for not only through want of them, does all fail that we seem to attempt, but it prevents our attempting any thing very remarkable, for the kingdom of Christ. Hence,

oftentimes it has been, that when any thing very considerable, that is new, is proposed to be done, for the advancement of religion, or the public good, many difficulties are found out, that are in the way, and a great many objections are started, and it may be, it is put off from one to another; but nobody does any thing. And after this manner good designs or proposals have oftentimes failed, and have sunk as soon as proposed. Whereas if we had but Mr. Whitefield's zeal and courage, what could not we do, with such a blessing as we might expect?

Zeal and courage will do much in persons of but an ordinary capacity; but especially would they do great things, if joined with great abilities. If some great men, that have appeared in our nation, had been as eminent in divinity, as they were in philosophy, and had engaged in the Christian cause, with as much zeal and fervor, as some others have done, and with a proportionable blessing of heaven, they would have conquered all Christendom, and turned the world upside down. We have many ministers in the land that do not want for abilities, they are persons of bright parts and learning; they should consider how much is expected, and will be required of them, by their Lord and master, and how much they might do for Christ, and what great honor, and how glorious a reward they might receive, if they had in their hearts an heavenly warmth, and divine heat, proportionable to their light.

With respect to candidates for the ministry, I will not undertake particularly to determine, what kind of examination or trial they should pass under, in order to their admission to that sacred work: But I think this is evident from the scripture, that another sort of trial, with regard to their virtue and piety, is requisite, than is required in order to persons being admitted into the visible church. The apostle directs, that *hands be laid suddenly on no man;* but that they should *first be tried*, before they are admitted to the work of the ministry: But it is evident that persons were suddenly admitted, by baptism, into the visible church, from time to time, on their profession of their faith in Christ, without such caution and

strictness in their probation. And it seems to me, those would act very unadvisedly, that should enter on that great and sacred work, before they had comfortable satisfaction concerning themselves, that they have had a saving work of God on their souls.

And though it may be thought, that I go out of my proper sphere, to intermeddle in the affairs of the colleges, yet I will take the liberty of an Englishman (that speaks his mind freely concerning public affairs) and the liberty of a minister of Christ(who doubtless may speak his mind as freely about things that concern the kingdom of his Lord and master) to give my opinion, in some things, with respect to those societies; the original and main design of which is to train up persons, and fit them for the work of the ministry. And I would say in general, that it appears to me that care should be taken, some way or other, that those societies should be so regulated, that they should, in fact, be nurseries of piety. Otherwise, they are fundamentally ruined and undone, as to their main design, and most essential end. They ought to be so constituted, that vice and idleness should have no living there: They are intolerable in societies, whose main design is, to train up youth in Christian knowledge and eminent piety, to fit them to be pastors of the flock of the blessed Jesus. I have heretofore had some acquaintance with the affairs of a college, and experience of what belonged to its tuition and government; and I cannot but think that it is practicable enough, so to constitute such societies, that there should be no being there, without being virtuous, serious and diligent. It seems to me to be a reproach to the land, that ever it should be so with our colleges, that instead of being places of the greatest advantages for true piety, one cannot send a child thither, without great danger of his being infected, as to his morals; as it has certainly sometimes been with these Societies: It is perfectly intolerable; and any thing should be done, rather than it should be so. If we pretend to have any colleges at all, under any notion of training up youth for the ministry, there should be some way found out, that should certainly prevent its being thus. To have societies for bringing persons up to

be ambassadors of Jesus Christ, and to lead souls to heaven, and to have them places of so much infection, is the greatest nonsense and absurdity imaginable.

And, as thorough and effectual care should be taken that vice and idleness are not tolerated in these societies, so certainly, the design of them requires, that extraordinary means should be used in them, for training up the students in vital religion, and experimental and practical godliness; so that they should be holy societies, the very place should be as it were sacred: They should be, in the midst of the land, fountains of piety and holiness. There is a great deal of pains taken, to teach the scholars human learning; there ought to be as much, and more care, thoroughly to educate them in religion, and lead them to true and eminent holiness. If the main design of these nurseries, is to bring up persons to teach Christ, then it is of the greatest importance that there should be care and pains taken, to bring those that are there educated, to the knowledge of Christ. It has been common in our public prayers, to call these societies, *the schools of the prophets*; and if they are schools, to train up young men to be prophets, certainly there ought to be extraordinary care there taken, to train them up to be Christians.

And I cannot see, why it is not on all accounts fit and convenient, for the governors and instructors of the colleges, particularly, singly and frequently to converse with the students, about the state of their souls. As is the practice of the Rev. Dr. Doddridge, one of the most noted of the present dissenting ministers in England, who keeps an academy at Northampton, as he himself informs the Rev. Mr. Wadsworth of Hartford, in Connecticut, in a letter dated at Northampton, March 6, 1740, 41. The original of which letter I have seen, and have by me an extract of it, sent to me, by Mr. Wadsworth; which is as follows:

"Through the divine goodness, I have every year the pleasure to see some plants taken out of my nursery, and set in neighboring congregations; where they generally settle with an unanimous consent, and that to a very remarkable degree, in some very large, and once divided congregations.

A circumstance, in which, I own and adore the hand of a wise and gracious God; and cannot but look upon it as a token for good. I have at present, a greater proportion of pious and ingenious youth under my care, than I ever before had. So that I hope the church may reasonably expect some considerable relief from hence, if God spare their lives a few years, and continue to them those gracious assistances, which he has hitherto mercifully imparted. I will not, Sir, trouble you at present, with a large account of my method of academical education: Only would observe, that I think it of vast importance, to instruct them carefully in the scriptures; and not only endeavor to establish them in the great truths of Christianity, but to labor to promote their practical influence on their hearts. For which purpose I frequently converse with each of them alone, and conclude the conversation with prayer. This does indeed take up a great deal of time; but I bless God, it is amply repaired, in the pleasure I have, in seeing my labor is not in vain in the Lord."

There are some that are not ministers, nor are concerned immediately in those things that appertain to their office, or in the education of persons for it, that are under great advantages to promote such a glorious work as this. Some laymen though it be not their business publicly to exhort and teach, yet are in some respects, under greater advantage to encourage and forward this work, than ministers. As particularly great men, or men that are high in honor and influence. How much might such do, to encourage religion, and open the way for it to have free course, and bear down opposition, if they were but inclined? There is commonly a certain unhappy shyness, in great men, with respect to religion, as though they were ashamed of it, or at least ashamed to do very much at it; whereby they dishonor, and doubtless greatly provoke the King of Kings, and very much wound religion among the common people. They are careful of their honor and seem to be afraid of appearing openly forward and zealous in religion, as though it were what would debase their character, and expose them to contempt. But in this day of bringing up the ark, they ought to be like David, that

great king of Israel, who *made himself vile* before the ark; and as he was the highest in honor and dignity, among God's people, so thought it became him to appear foremost, in the zeal and activity he manifested on that occasion; thereby animating and encouraging the whole congregation to praise the Lord, and rejoice before him, with all their might: And though it diminished him in the eyes of scoffing Michal, yet it did not at all abate the honor and esteem of the congregation of Israel, but advanced it; as appears by 2 Sam. vi. 22.

Rich men have a talent in their hands, in the disposal and improvement of which, they might very much promote such a work as this, if they were so disposed. They are far beyond others under advantage to do good, and lay up for themselves treasures in heaven. What a thousand pities is it, that for want of a heart, they commonly have no share at all there, but heaven is peopled mostly with the poor of this world? One would think that our rich men, that call themselves Christians, might devise some notable things, to do with their money, to advance the kingdom of their professed Redeemer, and the prosperity of the souls of men, at this time of such extraordinary advantage for it. It seems to me, that in this age, most of us have but very narrow, penurious notions of Christianity, as it respects our use and disposal of our temporal goods.

The primitive Christians had not such notions: They were trained up by the apostles in another way. God has greatly distinguished some of the inhabitants of Newengland, from others, in the abundance that he has given them of the good things of this life. If they could now be persuaded to lay out some considerable part of that which God has given them for the honor of God, and lay it up in heaven, instead of spending it for their own honor, or laying it up for their posterity, they would not repent of it afterwards. How liberally did the heads of the tribes contribute of their wealth, at the setting up the tabernacle, though it was in a barren wilderness? These are the days of the erecting the tabernacle of God amongst us. We have a particular account how the goldsmiths and the merchants helped to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, Neh. iii.

32. The days are coming spoken of in scripture, and I believe not very far off, when the sons of *Zion shall come from far, bringing their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord their God, and to the Holy One of Israel*; and when the merchants of the earth, shall trade for Christ, more than for themselves, and *their merchandize and hire shall be holiness to the Lord, and shall not be treasured, or laid up for posterity, but shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing*; and when *the ships of Tarshish shall bring* the wealth of the distant parts of the earth, *to the place of God's sanctuary, and to make the place of his feet glorious*; and *the abundance of the sea, shall be converted to the use of God's church, and she shall suck the milk of the Gentiles, and suck the breasts of kings.* The days are coming, when the great and rich men of the world, *shall bring their honor and glory into the church*, and shall, as it were, strip themselves, to spread their garments under Christ's feet, as he enters triumphantly into Jerusalem; and when those that will not do so shall have no glory, and their silver and gold shall be cankered, and their garments moth eaten; for the saints shall then inherit the earth, and they shall reign on earth, and those that honor God he will honor, and those that despise him shall be lightly esteemed.

If some of our rich men would give one quarter of their estates to promote this work, they would act a little, as if they were designed for the kingdom of heaven, and a little as rich men will act by and by, that shall be partakers of the spiritual wealth and glories of that kingdom.

Great things might be done for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, at this day, by those that have ability, by establishing funds, for the support and propagation of religion; by supporting some that are eminently qualified with gifts and grace, in preaching the gospel in certain parts of the country, that are more destitute of the means of grace; in searching out children, of promising abilities, and their hearts full of love to Christ, but of poor families, (as doubtless there are such now in the land) and bringing them up for the ministry; and in distributing books, that are remarkably fitted to

promote vital religion, and have a great tendency to advance this work; or if they would only bear the trouble, expence and loss of sending such books into various parts of the land, to be sold, it might be an occasion that ten times so many of those books should be bought, as otherwise would be; and in establishing and supporting schools, in poor towns and villages; which might be done on such a foundation, as not only to bring up children in common learning, but also, might very much tend to their conviction and conversion, and being trained up in vital piety; and doubtless something might be done this way, in old towns, and more populous places, that might have a great tendency to the flourishing of religion, in the rising generation.

But I would now proceed to mention some things, that ought to be done, at such a day as this, that concern all in general.

And here, the first thing I shall mention, is, *fasting and prayer*. It seems to me, that the circumstances of the present work do loudly call God's people to abound in this; whether they consider the experience God has lately given them, of the worth of his presence, and of the blessed fruits of the effusions of his Spirit, to excite them to pray for the continuance and increase, and greater extent of such blessings; or whether they consider the great encouragement God has lately given them, to pray for the outpourings of his Spirit, and the carrying on this work, by the great manifestations he has lately made, of the freeness and riches of his grace; and how much there is, in what we have seen of the glorious works of God's power and grace, to put us in mind of the yet greater things of this nature, that he has spoken of in his word, and to excite our longings for those things, and hopes of their approach; or whether we consider the great opposition that Satan makes against this work, and the many difficulties with which it is clogged, and the distressing circumstances that some parts of God's church in this land are under at this day, on one account and another.

So is God's will, through his wonderful grace, that the prayers of his saints should be one great and principal means of

carrying on the designs of Christ's kingdom in the world. When God has something very great to accomplish for his church, it is his will, that there should precede it, the extraordinary prayers of his people; as is manifest by Ezek. xxxvi. 37. "I will yet, for this, be inquired of, by the house of Israel, to do it for them;" together with the context. And it is revealed that, when God is about to accomplish great things for his church, he will begin by remarkably pouring out the Spirit of grace and supplication. Zech. xii. 10. If we are not to expect that the devil should go out of a particular person, that is under a bodily possession, without extraordinary prayer, *or prayer and fasting;* how much less, should we expect to have him cast out of the land, and the world without it.

I am sensible that considerable has been done in duties of this nature, in some places; but I do not think so much as God, in the present dispensations of his providence calls for. I should think the people of God in this land, at such a time as this is, would be in the way of their duty, to do three times so much at fasting and prayer as they do; not only, nor principally, for the pouring out of the Spirit on those towns or places where they belong; but that God would appear for his church, and in mercy to miserable men, to carry on his work in the land, and in the world of mankind, and to fulfil the things that he has spoken of in his word, that his church has been so long wishing and hoping and waiting for. *They that make mention of the Lord*, at this day, ought not *to keep silence*, and should *give God no rest, until he establish, and until he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth*, agreeably to Isa. lxii. 6, 7. Before the first great outpouring of the Spirit of God, on the Christian church, which began at Jerusalem, the church of God gave themselves to incessant prayer, Acts i. 13, 14. There is a time spoken of, wherein God will remarkably and wonderfully appear, for the deliverance of his church from all her enemies, and when he will *avenge his own elect*: And Christ reveals that this will be in answer to their incessant prayers, or *crying day and night*, Luke xviii. 7. In Israel, the *day of atonement*, which was their great day of fasting and

prayer, preceded and made way for the glorious and joyful *feast of tabernacles*. When Christ is mystically born into the world, to rule over all nations, it is represented in the 12th chapter of Revelations, as being in consequence of the churches *crying, and travailing in birth, and being pained to be delivered*. One thing here intended, doubtless is, her crying and agonizing in prayer.

God seems now, at this very time, to be waiting for this from us. When God is about to bestow some great blessing on his church, it is often his manner, in the first place, so to order things in his providence, as to shew his church their great need of it, and to bring them into distress for want of it, and so put them upon crying earnestly to him for it. And let us consider God's present dispensations towards his church in this land: A glorious work of his grace has been begun and carried on; and God has, of late, suffered innumerable difficulties to arise, that do in a great measure clog and hinder it, and bring many of God's dear children into great distress; and yet does not wholly forsake the work of his hand; there are remarkable tokens of his presence still to be seen, here and there; as though he was not forward to forsake us, and (if I may so say) as though he had a mind to carry on his work; but only was waiting for something that he expected in us, as requisite in order to it. And we have a great deal of reason to think, that one thing at least is, that we should further acknowledge the greatness and necessity of such a mercy, and our dependence on God for it, in earnest and importunate prayers to him. And by the many errors that have been run into, and the wounds we have thereby given ourselves and the cause that we would promote, and the mischief and confusion we have thereby made, God has hitherto been remarkably shewing us our great and universal dependence on him, and exceeding need of his help and grace: Which should engage our cries to him for it.

There is no way that Christians in a private capacity can do so much to promote the work of God, and advance the kingdom of Christ, as by prayer. By this even women, children and servants may have a public influence. Let persons

be never so weak, and never so mean, and under never so poor advantages to do much for Christ, and the souls of men otherwise; yet, if they have much of the spirit of grace and supplication, in this way, they may have power with him that is infinite in power, and has the government of the whole world: And so a poor man in his cottage may have a blessed influence all over the world. God is, if I may so say, at the command of the prayer of faith; and in this respect is, as it were, under the power of his people; *as princes, they have power with God, and prevail:* Though they may be private persons, their prayers are put in the name of a Mediator, that is a public person, being the head of the whole church, and the Lord of the universe: And if they have a great sense of the importance of eternal things, and concern for the precious souls of men, yet they need not regret it, that they are not preachers; they may go in their earnestness and agonies of soul, and pour out their souls before One that is able to do all things; before him they may speak as freely as ministers; they have a great High Priest, through whom they may come boldly at all times, and may vent themselves before a prayer hearing father, without any restraint.

If the people of God, at this day, instead of spending time in fruitless disputing, and talking about opposers, and judging of them, and animadverting upon the unreasonableness of their talk and behavior, and its inconsistence with true experience, would be more silent in this way, and open their mouths much more before God, and spend more time in fasting and prayer, they would be more in the way of a blessing. And if some Christians in the land, that have been complaining of their ministers, and struggling in vain to deliver themselves, from the difficulties they have complained of, under their ministry, had said and acted less before men, and had applied themselves with all their might to cry to God for their ministers, had as it were risen, and stormed heaven with their humble, fervent and incessant prayers for them, they would have been much more in the way of success.

God in his providence, appearing in the present state of things, does especially call on his people in Newengland to be

very much in praying to him for the pouring out of the Spirit upon ministers in the land. For though it is not for us to determine, concerning particular ministers, how much they have of the Spirit of God; yet in the general, it is apparent, that there is, at this day, need of very great degrees of the presence of God with the ministry in Newengland, much greater degrees of it than has hitherto been granted; they need it for themselves, and the church of God stands in extreme need of it.

In days of fasting and prayer, wherein the whole church or congregation is concerned, if the whole day, besides what is spent in our families, was not spent in the meetinghouse, but part of it in particular praying companies or societies, it would have a tendency to animate and engage devotion, more than if the whole day were spent in public, where the people are no way active themselves in the worship, any otherwise than as they join with the minister. The inhabitants of many of our towns are now divided into particular praying societies, most of the people, young and old, have voluntarily associated themselves, in distinct companies, for mutual assistance, in social worship, in private houses: What I intend, therefore, is, that days of prayer should be spent partly in these distinct praying companies. Such a method of keeping a fast as *this*, has several times been proved, viz. in the forenoon, after the duties of the family and closet, as early as might be, all the people of the congregation have gathered in their particular religious societies; companies of men by themselves, and companies of women by themselves; young men by themselves, and young women by themselves; and companies of children, in all parts of the town, by themselves, as many as were capable of social religious exercises; the boys by themselves, and girls by themselves: And about the middle of the day, at an appointed hour, all have met together in the house of God, to offer up public prayers, and to hear a sermon suitable to the occasion: And then, they have retired from the house of God again, into their private societies, and spent the remaining part of the day in praying together there, excepting so much as was requisite for the duties of the family and

closet, in their own houses. And it has been found to be of great benefit, to assist and engage the minds of the people in the duties of the day.

I have often thought it would be a thing very desirable, and very likely to be followed with a great blessing, if there could be some contrivance, that there should be an agreement of all God's people in America, that are well affected to this work, to keep a day of fasting and prayer to God; wherein we should all unite on the same day, in humbling ourselves before God for our past long continued lukewarmness and unprofitableness; not omitting humiliation for the errors that so many of God's people that have been zealously affected towards this work, through their infirmity and remaining blindness and corruption, have run into; and together with thanksgivings to God, for so glorious and wonderful a display of his power and grace, in the late outpourings of his Spirit; to address the Father of mercies, with prayers and supplications, and earnest cries, that he would guide and direct his own people, and that he would continue, and still carry on this work, and more abundantly and extensively pour out his Spirit; and particularly that he would pour out his Spirit upon ministers; and that he would bow the heavens and come down, and erect his glorious kingdom through the earth. Some perhaps may think that its being all on the same day, is a circumstance of no great consequence; but I cannot be of that mind: Such a circumstance makes the union and agreement of God's people in his worship the more visible, and puts the greater honor upon God, and would have a great tendency to assist and enliven the devotions of Christians: It seems to me it would mightily encourage and animate God's saints, in humbly and earnestly seeking to God, for such blessings which concern them all; and that it would be much for the rejoicing of all, to think, that at the same time, such multitudes of God's dear children, far and near, were sending up their cries to the same common Father, for the same mercies. Christ speaks of agreement in asking, as what contributes to the prevalence of the prayers of his people. Mat. xviii. 19. "Again I say unto you, that if any two of you, shall agree on earth, as touch-

ing any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. If the agreement or united purpose and appointment of but two of God's children, would contribute much to the prevalence of their prayers, how much more the agreement of so many thousands? Christ delights greatly in the union of his people, as appears by his prayer in the 17th of John: And especially is the appearance of their union in worship, lovely and attractive unto him.

I doubt not but such a thing as I have now mentioned is practicable, without a great deal of trouble. Some considerable number of ministers might meet together and draw up the proposal, wherein a certain day should be pitched upon, at a sufficient distance, endeavoring therein to avoid any other public day, that might interfere with the design, in any of the provinces, and the business of the day should be particularly mentioned; and these proposals should be published, and sent abroad, into all parts, with a desire that as many ministers as are disposed to fall in with them, would propose the matter to their congregations, and having taken their consent, would subscribe their names, together with the places of which they are ministers, and send back the proposals thus subscribed, to the printer; (the hands of many ministers might be to one paper) and the printer having received the papers thus subscribed, from all the provinces, might print the proposals again, with all the names; thus they might be sent abroad again, with the names, that God's people might know who are united with them in the affair: One of the ministers of Boston might be desired to have the oversight of the printing and dispersing the proposals. In such a way, perhaps, might be fulfilled in some measure, such a general mourning and supplication of God's people, as is spoken of, Zech. xii. at the latter end, with which the church's glorious day is to be introduced. And such a day might be something like the *day of atonement* in Israel, before the joyful *feast of tabernacles*.

One thing more I would mention concerning fasting and prayer, wherein I think there has been a neglect in ministers; and that is, that although they recommend, and much insist on

the duty of secret prayer, in their preaching; so little is said about secret fasting. It is a duty recommended by our Saviour to his followers, just in like manner as secret prayer is; as may be seen by comparing the 5th and 6th verses of the 6th chapter of Matthew with verses 16, 17, 18. Though I do not suppose that secret fasting is to be practised in a stated manner, and steady course as secret prayer, yet it seems to me it is a duty that all professing Christians should practice, and frequently practice. There are many occasions, of both a spiritual and temporal nature, that do properly require it; and there are many particular mercies, that we desire for ourselves or friends that it would be proper, in this manner, to seek of God.

Another thing I would also mention, wherein it appears to me that there has been an omission, with respect to the external worship of God. There has been of late, a great increase of preaching the word, and a great increase of social prayer, and a great increase of singing praises: These external duties of religion are attended, much more frequently than they used to be; yet I cannot understand that there is any increase of the administration of the Lord's supper, or that God's people do any more frequently commemorate the dying love of their Redeemer, in this sacred memorial of it, than they used to do: Though I do not see why an increase of love to Christ, should not dispose Christians, as much to increase in this, as in those other duties; or why it is not as proper, that Christ's disciples should abound in this duty, in this joyful season, which is spiritually supper-time, a feast day with God's saints, wherein Christ is so abundantly manifesting his dying love to souls, and is dealing forth so liberally of the precious fruits of his death. It seems plain by the scripture, that the primitive Christians were wont to celebrate this memorial of the sufferings of their dear Redeemer every Lord's day: And so I believe it will be again in the church of Christ, in days that are approaching. And whether we attend this holy and sweet ordinance so often now, or no, yet I cannot but think it would become us, at such a time as this, to attend it much oftener than is commonly done in the land.

But another thing I would mention, which it is of much greater importance, that we should attend to; and that is the duty, that is incumbent upon God's people at this day, to take heed, that while they abound in external duties of devotion, such as praying, hearing, singing, and attending religious meetings, there be a proportionable care to abound in moral duties, such as acts of righteousness, truth, meekness, forgiveness and love towards our neighbor; which are of much greater importance in the sight of God, than all the externals of his worship: Which our Saviour was particularly careful that men should be well aware of. Matt. ix. 13. "But go ye, and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." And chap. xii. 7. "But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless."

The internal acts and principles of the worship of God, or the worship of the heart, in the love and fear of God, trust in God, and resignation to God, &c. are the most essential and important of all duties of religion whatsoever; for therein consists the essence of all religion. But of this inward religion, there are two sorts of external manifestations or expressions. The one sort, are outward acts of worship, such as meeting in religious assemblies, attending sacraments, and other outward institutions, and honoring God with gestures, such as bowing, or kneeling before him, or with words, in speaking honorably of him, in prayer, praise or religious conference. And the other sort, are the expressions of our love to God, by obeying his moral commands, of self denial, righteousness, meekness, and Christian love, in our behavior among men. And the latter are of vastly the greatest importance in the Christian life. God makes little account of the former, in comparison of them. They are abundantly more insisted on, by the prophets, in the Old Testament, and Christ and his apostles, in the New. When these two kinds of duties are spoken of together, the latter are ever more greatly preferred. As in Isa. i. 12, to 18, and Amos v. 21, &c. and Mich. vi. 7, 8, and Isa. lviii. 5, 6, 7, and Zech. vii. ten first verses, and Jer. ii. seven first verses, and Matth. xv. 3, &c. Often, when the

times were very corrupt in Israel, the people abounded in the former kind of duties, but were at such times, always notoriously deficient in the latter; as the prophets complain, Isa. lviii. four first verses, Jer. vi. 13, compared with verse 20. Hypocrites and self righteous persons, do much more commonly abound in the former kind of duties, than the latter; as Christ remarks of the Pharisees, Matth. xxiii. 14, 23, and 24. When the scripture directs us to *shew our faith by our works*, it is principally the latter sort are intended; as appears by James ii. from 8th verse to the end, and I John ii. 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. And we are to be judged at the last day, especially by these latter sort of works; as is evident by the account we have of the day of judgment, in the 25th of Matthew. External acts of worship in words and gestures, and outward forms, are of little use, but as signs of something else, or as they are a profession of inward worship: They are not so properly shewing our religion by our deeds; for they are only a shewing our religion by words, or an outward profession. But he that shows religion in the other sort of duties, shews it in something more than a profession of words, he shews it in deeds. And though deeds may be hypocritical, as well as words; yet in themselves they are of greater importance, for they are much more profitable to ourselves and our neighbor. We cannot express our love to God, by doing any thing that is profitable to God; God would therefore have us do it in those things that are profitable to our neighbors, whom he has constituted his receivers: Our goodness extends not to God, but to our fellow Christians. The latter sort of duties, put greater honor upon God, because there is greater self denial in them. The external acts of worship, consisting in bodily gestures, words and sounds, are the cheapest part of religion, and least contrary to our lusts. The difficulty of thorough, external religion, does not lie in them. Let wicked men enjoy their covetousness, and their pride, their malice, envy and revenge, and their sensuality and voluptuousness, in their behavior amongst men, and they will be willing to compound the matter with God, and submit to what forms of worship you please, and as many

as you please; as is manifest in the Jews of old, in the days of the prophets, and the Pharisees in Christ's time, and the Papists and Mahometans at this day.

At a time when there is an appearance of the approach of any glorious revival of God's church, God does especially call his professing people to the practice of moral duties. Isa. lvi. 1. "Thus saith the Lord; keep ye judgment and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed." So when John preached that *the kingdom of heaven was at hand*, and cried to the people, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths strait*, as we have an account, Luke iii. 4, the people asked him, *What they should do?* He answers, *He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none, and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.* The publicans said, *What shall we do?* He answers, *Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers asked him*, What shall we do? He replies, *Do violence to no man; neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.* Verses 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

God's people at such a time as this, ought especially to abound in deeds of charity, or alms giving. We generally, in these days, seem to fall far below the true spirit and practice of Christianity, with regard to this duty, and seem to have but little notion of it, so far as I can understand the New Testament. At a time when God is so liberal of spiritual things, we ought not to be strait handed towards him, and sparing of our temporal things. So far as I can judge by the scripture, there is no external duty whatsoever, by which persons will be so much in the way, not only of receiving temporal benefits, but also spiritual blessings, the influences of God's holy Spirit in the heart, in divine discoveries, and spiritual consolations. I think it would be unreasonable to understand those promises, made to this duty, in the 58th chapter of Isaiah, in a sense exclusive of spiritual discoveries and comforts. Isa. lviii. 7, &c. "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out, to thy house? When thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then

shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward; then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer, thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee, the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day; and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." So, that giving to the poor is the way to receive spiritual blessings, is manifest by Psal. cxii. 4, &c. "Unto the upright, there ariseth light in the darkness; he is gracious, and full of compassion and righteous: A good man sheweth favor, and lendeth, he will guide his affairs with discretion; surely he shall not be moved forever; the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance; he shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord; his heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies: He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his horn shall be exalted with honor." That this is one likely means to obtain assurance, is evident by 1 John iii. 18, 19. "My little children let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth; and hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

We have a remarkable instance in Abraham, of God's rewarding deeds of charity with sweet discoveries of himself, when he had been remarkably charitable to his brother Lot, and the people that he had redeemed out of captivity with him, by exposing his life to rescue them, and had retaken not only the persons, but all the goods, the spoil that had been taken by Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and the king of Sodom offered him, that if he would give him the persons, he might take the goods to himself, Abraham refused to take any thing, even so much as a thread or shoe latchet, but returned all. He might have greatly enriched him-

self, if he had taken the spoils to himself, for it was the spoils of five wealthy kings, and their kingdoms, yet he coveted it not; the king and people of Sodom were now become objects of charity, having been stripped of all by their enemies, therefore Abraham generously bestowed all upon them; as we have an account in Gen. xiv. and four last verses. And he was soon rewarded for it, by a blessed discovery that God made of himself to him; as we have an account in the next words, "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abraham, in a vision, saying, Fear not Abraham, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." "I am thy shield, to defend thee in battle, as I have now done; and though thou hast charitably refused to take any reward, for exposing thy life to rescue this people, yet fear not, thou shalt not lose, thou shalt have a reward, I am thy exceeding great reward."

When Christ was upon earth he was poor, and an object of charity; and during the time of his public ministry, he was supported by the charity of some of his followers, and particularly certain women, of whom we read Luke viii. 2, 3. And these women were rewarded, by being peculiarly favored with gracious manifestations, which Christ made of himself to them. He discovered himself first to them after his resurrection, before the twelve disciples: They first saw a vision of glorious angels, who spake comfortably to them; and then Christ appeared to them, and spake peace to them, saying, *All hail, be not afraid; and they were admitted to come, and hold him by the feet, and worship him*, Matth. xxviii. And though we cannot now be charitable in this way, to Christ in person, who in his exalted state, is infinitely above the need of our charity; yet we may be charitable to Christ now, as well as they then; for though Christ is not here, yet he has left others in his room, to be his receivers, and they are the poor. Christ is yet poor in his members; and he that gives to them lends to the Lord: And Christ tells us that he shall look on what is done to them, as done to him.

Rebekah, in her marriage with Isaac, was undoubtedly a remarkable type of the church, in her espousals to the Lord

Jesus. But she found her husband, in doing deeds of charity, agreeable to the prayer of Abraham's servant, who prayed that this might be the thing that might distinguish and mark out the virgin, that was to be Isaac's wife. So Cornelius was brought to the knowledge of Christ, in this way. *He was a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house; which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. And an angel appeared to him, and said to him, thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God; and now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter,* &c. Acts x. at the beginning. And we have an account in the following parts of the chapter, how God by Peter's preaching revealed Christ to Cornelius and his family, and of the Holy Ghost's descending upon them, and filling their hearts with joy and their mouths with praises.

Some may possibly object that for persons to do deeds of charity, in hope of obtaining spiritual blessings and comforts in this way, would seem to shew a selfrighteous spirit, as though they would offer something to God to purchase these favors. But if this be a good objection, it may be made against every duty whatsoever. All external duties of the first table will be excluded by it, as well as those of the second. First table duties have as direct a tendency to raise selfrighteous persons' expectations of receiving something from God, on account of them, as second table duties; and on some accounts more, for those duties are more immediately offered *to God*, and therefore persons are more ready to expect something *from God* for them. But no duty is to be neglected, for fear of making a righteousness of it. And I have always observed, that those professors that are most partial in their duty, exact and abundant in external duties of the first table, and slack as to those of the second, are the most selfrighteous.

If God's people in this land, were once brought to abound in such deeds of love, as much as in praying, hearing, singing, and religious meetings and conference, it would be a most blessed omen: There is nothing would have a greater tendency to bring the God of love down from heaven to the earth: So amiable would be the sight, in the eyes of our lov-

ing and exalted Redeemer, that it would seem as it were fetch Him down from his throne in heaven, to set up His tabernacle with men on the earth, and dwell with them. I do not remember ever to have read of any remarkable outpouring of the Spirit, that continued any long time, but what was attended with an abounding in this duty. So we know it was with that great effusion of the Spirit that began at Jerusalem in the apostles' days: And so in the late remarkable revival of religion in Saxony, which began by the labors of the famous Professor Franck, and has now been carried on for above thirty years, and has spread its happy influences into many parts of the world; it was begun, and has been carried on, by a wonderful practice of this duty. And the remarkable blessing that God has given Mr. Whitefield, and the great success with which he has crowned him, may well be thought to be very much owing to his laying out himself so abundantly in charitable designs. And it is foretold, that God's people shall abound in this duty, in the time of the great outpouring of the Spirit that shall be in the latter days, Isa. xxxii. 5 and 8. "The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful. But the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand."

To promote a reformation, with respect to all sorts of duties, among a professing people, one proper means, and that which is recommended by frequent scripture examples, is their solemn, public renewing their covenant with God. And doubtless it would greatly tend to promote this work in the land, if the congregations of God's people could generally be brought to this. If a draught of a covenant should be made by their ministers, wherein there should be an express mention of those particular duties, that the people of the respective congregations have been observed to be most prone to neglect, and those particular sins that they have heretofore especially fallen into, or that it may be apprehended they are especially in danger of, whereby they may prevent or resist the motions of God's Spirit, and the matter should be fully proposed and explained to the people, and they have sufficient opportunity given them for consideration, and then they

should be led, all that are capable of understanding, particularly to subscribe the covenant, and also should all appear together, on a day of prayer and fasting, publicly to own it before God in his house, as their vow to the Lord; hereby congregations of Christians would do that which would be beautiful, and would put honor upon God, and be very profitable to themselves.

Such a thing as this, was attended with a very wonderful blessing in Scotland, and followed with a great increase of the blessed tokens of the presence of God, and remarkable outpourings of his Spirit; as the author of *the fulfilling of the Scripture* informs, p. 186, 5th edition.

A people must be taken, when they are in a good mood, when considerable religious impressions are prevailing among them; otherwise they will hardly be induced to this; but innumerable will be their objections and cavils against it.

One thing more I would mention, which if God should still carry on this work, would tend much to promote it, and that is, that an history should be published once a month, or once a fortnight, of the progress of it, by one of the ministers of Boston, who are near the press, and are most conveniently situated, to receive accounts from all parts. It has been found by experience, that the tidings of remarkable effects of the power and grace of God in any place, tend greatly to awaken and engage the minds of persons, in other places. It is a great pity therefore, but that some means should be used, for the most speedy, most extensive and certain giving information of such things, and that the country be not left, only to the slow, partial and doubtful information, and false representations of common report.

Thus I have, (I hope, by the help of God) finished what I proposed. I have taken the more pains in it, because it appears to me, that now God is giving us the most happy season to attempt an universal reformation, that ever was given in Newengland. And it is a thousand pities, that we should fail of that which would be so glorious, for want of being sensible of our opportunity, or being aware of those things that tend to hinder it, or our taking improper courses to obtain it,

or not being sensible in what way God expects we should seek it. If it should please God to bless any means for the convincing the country of His hand in this work, and bringing them fully and freely to acknowledge His glorious power and grace in it, and engage with one heart and soul, and by due methods, to endeavor to promote it, it would be a dispensation of divine providence, that would have a most glorious aspect, happily signifying the approach of great and glorious things to the church of God, and justly causing us to hope, that Christ would speedily come, to set up his kingdom of light, holiness, peace and joy on earth, as is foretold in his word.... Amen: Even so come LORD JESUS!

AN

HUMBLE ATTEMPT

TO PROMOTE

EXPLICIT AGREEMENT

AND

VISIBLE UNION

OF

GOD's PEOPLE

IN

EXTRAORDINARY PRAYER

FOR THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM ON EARTH, PURSUANT TO SCRIPTURE PROMISES AND PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE LAST TIME.

Vol. III. 2 W

UNION IN PRAYER.

PART I.

The Text *opened, and an Account given of the Affair proposed in the* Memorial *from* Scotland.

ZECH. viii. 20, 21, 22.

THUS SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS, IT SHALL YET COME TO PASS, THAT THERE SHALL COME PEOPLE, AND THE INHABITANTS OF MANY CITIES; AND THE INHABITANTS OF ONE CITY SHALL GO TO ANOTHER, SAYING, LET US GO SPEEDILY TO PRAY BEFORE THE LORD, AND TO SEEK THE LORD OF HOSTS: I WILL GO ALSO. YEA, MANY PEOPLE AND STRONG NATIONS SHALL COME TO SEEK THE LORD OF HOSTS IN JERUSALEM, AND TO PRAY, BEFORE THE LORD.

IN this chapter we have a prophecy of a future glorious advancement of the church of God; wherein it is evident, something further is intended than ever was fulfilled to the nation of the Jews under the Old Testament. For here are plain prophecies of such things as never were fulfilled before the coming of the Messiah: Particularly what is said in the two last verses in the chapter, of *many people and strong nations worshipping and seeking the true God*, and of so great an accession of Gentile nations to the church of God, that by far the greater part of the visible worshippers of God should consist of this new accession, so that they should be to the other as *ten to one*; a certain number for an uncertain. There never happened any thing, from the time of the Prophet Zechariah to the coming of Christ, to answer this prophesy: And it can have no fulfilment but either in the calling of

the Gentiles, in and after the days of the apostles, or in the future glorious enlargement of the church of God in the *latter ages* of the world, so often foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament, and by the Prophet Zechariah in particular, in the latter part of this prophecy. It is most probable, that what the Spirit of God has chief respect to, is that *last* and greatest enlargement and most glorious advancement of the church of God on earth; in the benefits of which especially, the Jewish nation were to have a share, and a very eminent and distinguishing share. There is a great agreement between what is here said, and other prophecies, that must manifestly have respect to the church's latter day glory: As that in Isa. lx. 2, 3, 4. "The Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee: And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee." That whole chapter, beyond all dispute, has respect to the most glorious state of the church of God on earth. So chap. lxvi. 8. "Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Shall a nation be born at once?" Ver. 10. "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her." Ver. 12. "I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream." Micah. iv. at the beginning, "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it; and many nations shall come and say, come, and let us go up unto the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." See also, Isa. ii. at the beginning.... There has been nothing yet brought to pass, in any measure to answer these prophecies. And as the prophecy in my text and the following verse does agree with them, so there is reason to think it has a respect to the same times. And

indeed there is a remarkable agreement in the description given throughout the chapter, with the representations made of those times elsewhere in the prophets; as may be seen by comparing ver. 3, with Isa. lx. 14. Ver. 4, with Isa. lxv. 20, 22, and xxxiii. 24. Ver. 6, 7, 8, with Ezek. xxxvii. 2, 11, 12, 21. Ver. 7, with Isa. xliii. 5, 6, and xlix. 12, and lix. 19. Ver. 12, 13, with Hos. ii. 21, 22, and Ezek. xxxiv. 22. ...29. Ver. 8, 12, 13, with Ezek. xxxvi. 28,....30. Ver. 13, with Zeph. iii. 20, and Isa. xix. 24. Ver. 19, with Isa. lxi. 3, and Jer. xxxi. 12, 13, 14.

So that however the prophet, in some things that are said in this chapter, may have respect to future smiles of Heaven on the nation of the Jews, lately returned from the Babylonish captivity, and resettled in the land of Canaan, in a great increase of their numbers and wealth, and the return of more captives from Chaldea and other countries, &c. yet the Spirit of God has doubtless respect to things far *greater* than these, and of which these were but faint resemblances. We find it common in the prophecies of the Old Testament, that when the prophets are speaking of the favors and blessings of God on the Jews, attending or following their return from the Babylonish captivity, the Spirit of God takes occasion from thence to speak of the incomparably greater blessings on the church, that shall attend and follow her deliverance from the spiritual or mystical Babylon, of which those were a type; and is, as it were, led away to speak almost wholly of these latter, and vastly greater things, so as to seem to forget the former.

And whereas the prophet in this chapter, speaks of God's *bringing his people again from the east and west to Jerusalem* (ver. 7, 8.) *And multitudes of all nations taking hold of the skirts of the Jews*; so far as we may suppose that this means literally that nation of the posterity of Jacob, it cannot have chief respect to any return of the Jews from Babylon and other countries, in those ancient times before Christ; for no such things as are here spoken of, attended any such return: But it must have respect to the great calling and gathering of the Jews into the fold of Christ, and their being received to the bless-

ings of his kingdom, after the fall of Antichrist, or the destruction of mystical Babylon.

In the text we have an account *how* this future glorious advancement of the church of God should be brought on, or introduced; viz. By great multitudes in different towns and countries taking up a *joint resolution*, and coming into an express and visible *agreement*, that they will, by united and extraordinary *prayer*, seek to God that he would come and manifest himself, and grant the tokens and fruits of his gracious presence.

Particularly we may observe,

1. The *duty*, with the attendance on which the glorious event foretold shall be brought on; viz. The duty of prayer. Prayer, some suppose, is here to be taken *synechdochically*, for the whole of the worship of God; prayer being a principal part of the worship of the church of God, in the days of the gospel, when sacrifices are abolished: And so that this is to be understood only as a prophecy of a great revival of religion, and of the true worship of God among his visible people, the accession of others to the church, and turning of multitudes from idolatry to the worship of the true God. But it appears to me reasonable to suppose, that something more special is intended, with regard to the duty of prayer; considering that prayer is here expressly and repeatedly mentioned; and also considering how parallel this place is with many other prophecies, that speak of an extraordinary spirit of prayer, as preceding and introducing that glorious day of revival of religion, and advancement of the church's peace and prosperity, so often foretold (which I shall have occasion to mention hereafter) and particularly the agreeableness of what is here said, with what is said afterwards by the same prophet, of the *pouring out of a spirit of grace and supplications*, as that with which this great revival of religion shall begin, ch. xii. 10.

2. The *good*, that shall be sought by prayer; which is God himself. It is said once and again, *They shall go to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts.* This is the good they ask for and seek by prayer, the Lord of hosts himself. To *seek God*, as the expression may perhaps be some-

times used in scripture, may signify no more than seeking the favor or mercy of God. And if it be taken so here, *praying before the Lord*, and *seeking the Lord of Hosts*, must be looked upon as synonymous expressions. And it must be confessed to be a common thing in scripture, to signify the same thing repeatedly, by various expressions of the same import, for the greater emphasis. But certainly that expression of *seeking the Lord*, is very commonly used to signify something more than merely in general, to seek some mercy of God: It implies, that God himself is the great good desired and sought after; that the blessings pursued are God's gracious presence, the blessed manifestations of him, union and intercourse with him; or, in short, God's manifestations and communications of himself by his holy Spirit. Thus the Psalmist *desired God, thirsted after him, and sought him.* Psal. lxiii. 1, 2, 8. "O God thou art my Lod; early will I seek thee. My flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. My soul followeth hard after thee." Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." The Psalmist earnestly pursued after God, *his soul thirsted after him, he stretched forth his hands unto him*, &c. Psal. cxliii. 6. And therefore it is in scripture the peculiar character of the saints, that they are those that seek God. Psal. xxiv. 6. "This is the generation of them that seek Him." Psal. lxix. 32. "Your heart shall live that seek God;" and in many other places. If the expression in the text be understood agreeably to this sense, then by *seeking the Lord of Hosts*, we must understand a seeking, that God who had withdrawn, as it were hid himself, for a long time, would return to his church, and grant the tokens and fruits of his gracious presence, and those blessed communications of his Spirit to his people, and to mankind on the earth, which he had often promised, and which his church had long waited for.

And it seems reasonable, to understand the phrase, *seeking the Lord of Hosts*, in this sense here; and not as merely signifying the same thing with praying to God: Not only be-

cause the expression is repeatedly added to *praying before the Lord*, in the text as signifying something more; but also because the phrase, taken in this sense, is exactly agreeable to other parallel prophetic representations. Thus God's people's seeking by earnest prayer, the promised restoration of the church of God, after the Babylonish captivity, and the great apostasy that occasioned it, is called their *seeking God, and searching for him*; and God's granting this promised revival and restoration is called his being found of them. Jer. xxix. 10.....14. "For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye go and call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you; and ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart; and I will be found of you, saith the Lord, and I will turn away your captivity." And the prophets from time to time, represent God, in a low and afflicted state of his church, as being withdrawn and hiding himself. Isa. xlv. 15. "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." Chap. lvii. 17. "I hid me, and was wroth." And they represent God's people, while his church is in such a state, before God delivers and restores the same, as *seeking Him, looking for Him, searching and waiting for Him, and calling after Him.* Hos. v. 15. "I will go and return unto my place, until they acknowledge their offence, and. seek my face: In their affliction they will seek me early." Isa. viii. 17. "I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him." And when God, in answer to their prayers and succeeding their endeavors, delivers, restores and advances his church, according to his promise, then he is said to answer, and come, and say, Here am I, and to shew Himself; and they are said to find Him, and see Him plainly. Isa. lviii. 9. "Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; and thou shalt cry, and he shall say, here I am." Isa. xlv. 17. "But Israel shall be saved in

the Lord, with an everlasting salvation." And ver. 19. "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain." Chap. xxv. 8, 9. "The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off the earth. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us: This is the Lord, we have waited for him; we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation." Together with the next chapter, ver. 8, 9. "Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, we have waited for thee: The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea with my spirit within me will I seek thee early. For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." Isa. lii. 6, 7, 8. "Therefore my people shall know my name: Therefore they shall know in that day, that I am He that doth speak: Behold, it is I. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion."

3. We may observe who they are, that shall be united in thus seeking the Lord of Hosts: *The inhabitants of many cities*, and of many countries, *yea, many people, and strong nations*; great multitudes in different parts of the world shall conspire in this business. From the representation made in the prophecy, it appears rational to suppose, that it will be fulfilled something after this manner; first, that there shall be given much of a spirit of prayer to God's people in many places, disposing them to come into an express agreement, unitedly to pray to God in an extraordinary manner, that he would appear for the help of his church, and in mercy to mankind, and pour out his Spirit, revive his work, and advance his spiritual kingdom in the world as he has promised; and that this disposition to such prayer, and union in it, will gradually spread more and more, and increase to greater de-

grees; with which at length will gradually be introduced a revival of religion, and a disposition to greater engagedness in the worship and service of God, amongst his professing people; that this being observed, will be the means of awakening others, making them sensible of the wants of their souls, and exciting in them a great concern for their spiritual and everlasting good, and putting them upon earnestly crying to God for spiritual mercies, and disposing them to join with God's people in that extraordinary seeking and serving of God, which they shall see them engaged in; and that in this manner religion shall be propagated, until the awakening reaches those that are in the *highest stations*, and until *whole nations* be awakened, and there be at length an accession of many of the chief nations of the world to the church of God. Thus after the inhabitants of many cities of Israel, or of God's professing people, have taken up, and pursued a joint resolution, to go and pray before the Lord, and seek the Lord of Hosts, others shall be drawn to worship and serve Him with them; until at length *many people* and *strong nations* shall join themselves to them; and there shall, in process of time, be a vast accession to the church, so that it shall be ten times as large as it was before; yea, at length, all nations shall be converted unto God. Thus *ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, of the skirt of him that is a Jew* (in the sense of the apostle, Rom. ii. 28, 29) *saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you.* And thus that shall be fulfilled, Psal. lxv. 2. "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.

4. We may observe the mode of their union in this duty. It is a visible union, an union by explicit agreement, a joint resolution declared by one to another, come into by being first proposed by some, and readily and expressly fallen in with by others. The inhabitants of one city shall apply themselves to the inhabitants of another, saying, *Let us go*, &c. Those to whom the motion is made, shall comply with it; the proposal shall take with many, it shall be a prevailing, spreading thing; one shall follow another's example, one and another shall say, *I will go also.* Some suppose that those words, *I will go also*,

are to be taken as the words of him that makes the proposal; as much as to say, I do not propose that to you, which I am not willing to do myself, I desire *you* to go, and I am ready to go *with you*. But this is to suppose no more to be expressed in these latter words, than was expressed before in the proposal itself; for these words, *let us go*, signify as much, as that I am willing to go, and desire you to go with me. It seems to me much more natural, to understand these latter words as importing the *consent* of those to whom the proposal is made, or the *reply* of one and another that falls in with it. this is much more agreeable to the plain design of the text, which is to represent the concurrence of great numbers in this affair; and more agreeable to the representation made in the next verse, of one following another, many *taking hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew*. And though, if the words are thus understood, we must suppose an ellipsis in the text, something understood that is not expressed, as if it had been said, *Those of other cities shall say* I will go also; yet this is not difficult to be supposed; such ellipses are very common in scripture. We have one exactly parallel with it in Jer. iii. 22. "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings: Behold we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God," i. e. the backsliding children shall say, "Behold, we come unto thee," &c. And in Cant. iv. last, and v. 1. "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse," i. e. her beloved shall say, "I am come into my garden." We have the like throughout that Song. So Psal l. 6, 7. "The heaven shall declare his righteousness; for God is Judge himself. Hear, O my people, and I will speak," i. e. the judge shall say, "Hear, O my people," &c. So Psal. lxxxii. 1, 2. The Psalms and prophets abound with such figures of speech.

5. We may observe the *manner of prayer* agreed on, or the manner in which they agree to engage in and perform the duty. Let us go *speedily* to pray; or as it is in the margin, Let us go *continually*. The words literally translated are, *Let us go in going*. Such an ingemination or doubling of words

is very common in the Hebrew language, when it is intended that a thing shall be very strongly expressed; it generally implies the superlative degree of a thing; as the *Holy of Holies* signifies the most holy: But it commonly denotes, not only the utmost degree of a thing but also the utmost certainty; as when God said to Abraham, *In multiplying, I will multiply thy seed*, Gen. xxii. 17, it implies both that God would certainly multiply his seed, and also multiply it exceedingly. So when God said to Adam, *In the day that thou eatest thereof, in dying thou shalt die* (as the words are in the original) it implies both that he should *surely* die, and also that he should die most *terribly*, should utterly perish, and be destroyed to the utmost degree. Yea, sometimes it seems to imply something else still: And in short, as this ingemination of words in the Hebrew, in general denotes the strength of expression, so it is used to signify almost all those things that are wont to be signified by the various forms of strong speech in other languages: Sometimes it signifies the utmost degree of a thing; sometimes certainty; sometimes the peremptoriness and terribleness of a threatening, or the greatness and positiveness of a promise, the strictness of a command, and the earnestness of a request. When God says to Adam, *Dying thou shalt die*, it is equivalent to such strong expressions in English as, *thou shalt die indeed*, or, *thou shalt die with a witness*. So when it is said in the text, *let us go in going, and pray before the Lord*, the strength of the expression represents the earnestness of those that make the proposal, their great engagedness in the affair; and with respect to the duty proposed, it may be understood to signify, that they should be speedy, fervent, and constant in it; or, in one word, that it should be *thoroughly* performed.

6. We may learn from the tenor of this prophecy, together with the context, that this union in such prayer is foretold as a *becoming* and *happy* thing, and that which would be acceptable to God, and attended with glorious success.

From the whole we may infer, that it is a very *suitable* thing, and *well pleasing to God*, for many people, in different parts of the world, by express *agreement*, to come into a *visible*

union, in extraordinary, speedy, fervent and constant *prayer*, for those great effusions of the *Holy Spirit*, which shall bring on that *advancement* of Christ's church and kingdom, that God has so often promised shall be in the *latter ages* of the world.

And so from hence I would infer the *duty* of God's people, with regard to the *memorial* lately sent over into America, from Scotland, by a number of ministers there, proposing a *method* for such an *union* as has been spoken of, in extraordinary prayer for this great mercy.

And it being the special design of this discourse, to persuade such as are friends to the interests of Christ's kingdom, to a *compliance* with the proposal and request made in that memorial, I shall first give a short *historical* account of the *affair* it relates to, from letters, papers and pamphlets, that have come over from Scotland; to which I shall annex the *memorial* itself: And then I shall offer some *arguments* and *motives*, tending to induce the friends of religion to fall in with what is proposed: And lastly, make answer to some *objections* that may possibly be made against it.

As to the *first* of these things, viz. an historical account of the concert, which the memorial relates to, the following observations may give a sufficient view of that affair.

In October, A. D. 1744, a number of ministers in Scotland, taking into consideration the state of God's church, and of the world of mankind, judged that the providence of God, at such a day, did loudly call such as were concerned for the welfare of Zion, to *united*, *extraordinary* applications to the God of all grace, suitably acknowledging Him as the fountain of all the spiritual benefits and blessings of his church, and earnestly praying to Him, that he would *appear in his glory*, and favor Zion, and manifest his compassion to the world of mankind, by an abundant effusion of his *Holy Spirit* on all the churches, and the whole habitable earth, to revive true religion in all parts of Christendom, and to deliver *all nations* from their great and manifold spiritual calamities and miseries, and bless them with the unspeakable benefits of the kingdom of our glorious Redeemer, and *fill the whole earth with His glory*. And con-

sulting one another on the subject, they looked on *themselves*, for their own part, obliged to engage in this duty; and, as far as in them lay, to persuade *others* to the same: And to endeavor to find out and fix on some *method*, that should most effectually tend to promote and uphold such extraordinary application to heaven among God's people. And after seeking to God by prayer for direction, they determined on the following method, as what they would conform to in their own practice, and propose to be practised by others, for the *two years* next following, viz. to set apart some time on Saturday evening and Sabbath morning, every week, for the purpose aforesaid, as other duties would allow to every one respectively; and more solemnly, the first Tuesday of each quarter (beginning with the first Tuesday of November then next ensuing) either the whole day, or part of the day, as persons find themselves disposed, or think their circumstances will allow: The time to be spent either in *private* praying societies, or in *public* meetings, or alone in *secret*, as shall be found most practicable, or judged most convenient, by such as are willing, in some way or other, to join in this affair: But not that any should make any promises, or be looked upon as under strict bonds in any respect, constantly and without fail to observe every one of these days, whatever their circumstances should be, or however other duties and necessary affairs might interfere; or that persons should look upon themselves bound with regard to these days in any wise as though the time were holy, or the setting them apart for religious purposes were established by sacred authority: But yet, as a proper guard against negligence and unsteadiness, and a prudent preservative from yielding to a disposition, that persons might be liable to, through the prevalence of indolence and listlessness, to excuse themselves on trivial occasions, it was proposed, that those that unite in this affair, should resolve with themselves, that if, by urgent business, or otherwise, they were hindered from joining with others, on the very day agreed on, yet they would not wholly neglect bearing their part in the duty proposed, but would take the first convenient day following, for that purpose.

The reason why Saturday evening and Lord'sday morning were judged most convenient for the *weekly* seasons, was, that these times being so near the time of dispensing *gospel ordinances* through the Christian world, which are the great means, in the use of which God is wont to grant his Spirit to mankind, and the principal means that the Spirit of God makes use of to carry on his *work of grace*, it may well be supposed that the minds of Christians in general will at these seasons be especially disengaged from secular affairs, and disposed to pious meditations and the duties of devotion, and more naturally led to seek the communications of the Holy Spirit, and success of the means of grace. And as to the *quarterly* times, it was thought helpful to memory, that they should be on one or other of the *first* days of each quarter: Tuesday was preferred to Monday, because in some places people might have public prayers and sermon on the stated day, which might not be so convenient on Monday, as on some day at a greater distance from the Sabbath.

It was reckoned a *chief use* of such an agreement and method as this, that it would be a good expedient for the maintaining and keeping up, amongst the people of God, that great Christian duty of *prayerfulness* for the *coming of Christ's kingdom*, in general, which Christ has directed his followers to be so much in, that it may not be out of mind, and in a great measure sunk. Things, that we are too little inclined to, through sloth, carnality, or a fulness of our own worldly and private concerns, and that are to be attended at some seasons or other, and have no special seasons stated for them, are apt to be *forgotten*, or *put off* from time to time, and as it were adjourned *without day*; and so, if not wholly neglected, yet too little attended. But when we fix certain seasons, that we resolve, unless extraordinarily hindered, to devote to the duty, it tends to prevent forgetfulness, and a settled negligence of it. The certain returns of the season will naturally refresh the memory; will tend to put us in mind of the precept of Christ, and the obligations that lie on all his followers, to abound in such a *duty*, and renewedly engage us to the consideration of the importance and necessity and unspeakable value of the

mercy sought; and so, by frequent renovation, to keep alive the consideration and sense of these things at *all times*. Thus the first promoters of this agreement judged, that it would be subservient to more abundant prayerfulness for effusions of the Holy Spirit, at all times through the year, both in secret and social worship; particularly as to this last, in congregations, families, and other praying societies. And then they also judged, that such an *agreed union* would tend to *animate* and *encourage* God's people in the duty proposed; and that particular persons and societies, knowing that great multitudes of their fellow Christians, in so many distant places, were at the same time (as a token of the union of their hearts with them in this affair) by agreement engaged in the same holy exercise, would naturally be enlivened in the duty by such a consideration.

It was not thought best, to propose at first a longer time for the continuance of this precise method, than two years: It being considered, that it is not possible, before any trial, so well to judge of the expedience of a particular method and certain circumstances of the managing and ordering such an affair, as after some time of experience. And it was not known, but that after longer consideration, and some trial, it might be thought best to alter some circumstances; or whether others, that had not yet been consulted, might not propose a better method. The time first agreed on, though but short, was thought sufficient to give opportunity for judgment and experience, and for such as were disposed to union in an affair of such a nature, in distant places, mutually to communicate their sentiments on the subject.

The way, in which those that first projected and came into this agreement, thought best for the giving notice of it and proposing it to others, was not by any thing published from the press; but by personal conversation with such as they could conveniently have immediate access to, and by private correspondence with others at a distance. At first it was intended, that some formal paper, proposing the matter, should be sent about for proper amendments and improvements, and then concurrence: But on more mature deliberation, it was

considered how this might give a handle to objections (which they thought it best, to the utmost, to avoid in the infancy of the affair) and how practicable it was, without any such formality, to spread the substance of the proposal by private letters, together with a request to their correspondents, mutually to communicate their thoughts. Therefore this was fixed on, as the method that was preferable at the beginning. Accordingly, they proposed and endeavored to promote the affair in this way ; and with such success, that great numbers in Scotland and England fell in with the proposal, and some in North America. As to Scotland, it was complied with by numbers in the four chief towns, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee, and many country towns and congregations in various parts of the land : One of the ministers, that was primarily concerned in this affair, in a letter to one of his correspondents, speaks of an explicit declaration of the concurrence of the praying societies in Edinburgh, which they had made in a letter. The number of the praying societies in that city is very considerable : Mr. Robe of Kilsyth, (in a letter to Mr. Prince of Boston, dated November 3, 1743) says, there were then above thirty societies of young people there newly erected, some of whom consisted of upwards of thirty members. As to Glasgow, this union was unanimously agreed to by about fortyfive praying societies there ; as an eminent minister in that city informs, in a letter.

The two years, first agreed on, ended last November. A little before this time expired, a number of ministers in Scotland agreed on a memorial to be printed, and sent abroad to their brethren in various parts, proposing to them and requesting of them to join with them in the continuance of this method of united prayer, and in endeavors to promote it.... Copies of which memorial have lately been sent over into Newengland, to the number of near five hundred, directed to be distributed in almost every county in this province of the Massachusetts Bay, and also in several parts of Connecticut, Newhampshire, Rhodeisland, Newyork, Newjersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Carolina, and Georgia.... The most (I suppose) of these were sent to one of the congre-

gational ministers in Boston, with a letter subscribed by twelve ministers in Scotland, about the affair: Many of them to another of the said ministers of Boston; and some to a minister in Connecticut. It being short, I shall here insert a copy of it at length. It is as follows:

MEMORIAL

From several Ministers in Scotland, to their brethren in different places, for continuing a Concert for Prayer, first entered into in the year 1744.

WHEREAS it was the chief scope of this Concert, to promote more abundant application to a duty that is perpetually binding, *prayer that our Lord's kingdom may come*, joined with *praises*: And it contained some circumstantial expedients, apprehended to be very subservient to that design, relating to stated times for such exercises, so far as this would not interfere with other duties; particularly a part of Saturday evening, and Sabbath morning, every week; and more solemnly of some one of the first days of each of the four great divisions of the year, that is, of each quarter; as the first Tuesday, or first convenient day after: And the concert, as to this circumstance, was extended only to two years; it being intended, that before these expired, persons engaged in the concert should reciprocally communicate their sentiments and inclinations, as to the prolonging of the time, with or without alteration, as to the circumstance mentioned: And it was intended by the first promoters, that others at a distance should propose such circumstantial amendments or improvements, as they should find proper: It is hereby earnestly intreated, that such would communicate their sentiments accordingly, now that the time first proposed is near expiring.

II. To induce those already engaged to adhere, and others to accede to this concert; it seems of importance to observe, that declarations of concurrence, the communicating and spreading of which are so evidently useful, are to be understood in such a latitude, as to keep at the greatest distance

from entangling men's minds: Not as binding men to set apart any stated days from secular affairs, or even to fix on any part of such and such precise days, whether it be convenient or not; nor as absolute promises in any respect: But as friendly, harmonious resolutions, with liberty to alter circumstances as shall be found expedient. On account of all which latitude, and that the circumstantial part extends only to a few years, it is apprehended, the concert cannot be liable to the objections against periodical religious times of human appointment.

III. It is also humbly offered to the consideration of ministers, and others furnished with gifts for the most public instructions, whether it might not be of great use, by the blessing of God, if short and nervous scriptural *persuasives* and *directions to the duty in view, were composed and published* (either by particular authors, or several joining together; which last way might some times have peculiar advantages) *and that from time to time*, without too great intervals; the better to keep alive on men's minds a just sense of the obligations to a duty so important in itself, and in which many may be in danger to faint and turn remiss, without such repeated incitements: And *whether it would not also be of great use, if ministers would be pleased to preach frequently on the importance and necessity of prayer for the coming of our Lord's kingdom*; particularly near the quarterly days, or on these days themselves, where there is public worship at that time.

IV. They who have found it incumbent on them to publish this memorial at this time, having peculiar advantages for spreading it, do intreat that the desire of concurrence and assistance contained in it, may by no means be understood as restricted to any particular denomination or party, or to those who are of such or such opinions about any former instances of remarkable religious concern; but to be extended to all, who shall vouchsafe any attention to this paper, and have at heart the interest of vital Christianity, and the power of Godliness; and who, however differing about other things, are convinced of the importance of fervent prayer, to promote that common interest, and scripture persuasives to of promote such prayer.

V. As the first printed account of this concert was not a proposal of it, as a thing then to begin, but a narration of it, as a design already set on foot, which had been brought about with much harmony, by means of private letters; so the farther continuance, and, it is hoped, the farther spreading of it seems in a promising way of being promoted by the same means; as importunate desires of the renewing the concert have been transmitted already from a very distant corner abroad, where the regard to it has of late increased: But notwithstanding of what may be done by private letters, it is humbly expected, that a memorial spread in this manner, may, by God's blessing, farther promote the good ends in view; as it may be usefully referred to in letters, and may reach where they will not.

VI. Whereas in a valuable letter, from the corner just now mentioned as a place where regard to the concert has lately increased, it is proposed, that it should be continued for seven years, or at least for a much longer time than what was specified in the first agreement; those concerned in this memorial, who would wish rather to receive and spread directions and proposals on this head, than to be the first authors of any, apprehend no inconvenience, for their part, in agreeing to the seven years, with the latitude above described, which reserves liberty to make such circumstantial alterations, as may be hereafter found expedient: On the contrary it seems of importance, that the labor of spreading a concert, which has already extended to so distant parts, and may, it is hoped, extend farther, may not need to be renewed sooner, at least much sooner; as it is uncertain but that may endanger the dropping of it; and it seems probable, there will be less zeal in spreading of it, if the time proposed for its continuance be too inconsiderable. Mean time, declarations of concurrence for a less number of years may greatly promote the good ends in view; Though it seems very expedient, that it should exceed what was first agreed on; seeing it is found on trial, that that time, instead of being too long, was much too short.

VII. If persons who formerly agreed to this concert, should now discontinue it; would it not look too like that fainting in prayer, against which we are so expressly warned in scrip-

ture? And would not this be the more unsuitable at this time, in any within the British dominions, when they have the united calls of such public chastisements and deliverances, to more concern than ever about public reformation, and consequently about that which is the source of all thorough reformation, the regenerating and sanctifying influence of the Almighty Spirit of God? August 26, 1746."

The minister in Boston forementioned (to whom most of the copies of this memorial were sent) who, I suppose, has had later and more full intelligence than I have had, says, concerning the proposal, in a letter; the motion seems to come from above, and to be wonderfully spreading in Scotland, England, Wales, Ireland, and North America.

PART II.

Motives to a Compliance *with what is proposed in the* Memorial.

I NOW proceed to the second thing intended in this discourse, viz. to offer to consideration some things, which may tend to induce the people of God to comply with the proposal and request, made to them in the memorial.

And I desire that the following things may be considered.

1. It is evident from the scripture, that there is yet remaining a great advancement of the interest of religion and the kingdom of Christ in this world, by an abundant outpouring of the Spirit of God, far greater and more extensive than ever yet has been. It is certain, that many things, which are spoken concerning a glorious time of the church's enlargement and prosperity in the latter days, have never yet been fulfilled. There has never yet been any propagation and prevailing of religion, in any wise, of that extent and universality, which the prophecies represent. It is often foretold and signified, in a great variety of strong expressions, that there should a time come, when all nations through the whole

habitable world, should embrace the true religion, and be brought into the church of God. It was often promised to the Patriarchs, that in their seed all the nations, or (as it is sometimes expressed) all the families of the earth should be blessed. (See Gen. xii. 3.....xviii. 18.....xxii. 18.....xxvi. 4, and xxviii. 14.) Agreeably to this, it is said of the Messiah Psal. lxxii. 11. That "all nations shall serve him;" and in Ver. 17, men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed." And in Isa. ii. 2, it is said, that "all nations shall flow unto the mountain of the house of the Lord." And Jer. iii. 17. That "all nations shall be gathered unto the name of the Lord to Jerusalem, and shall walk no more after the imagination of their evil heart." So it is said, That *all flesh shall come and worship before the Lord*, Isa. lxvi, 23. And that *all flesh should see the glory of God together*, Isa. xl. 5. And that *all flesh should come to him that hears prayer*, Psal. lxv. 2. Christ compares the *kingdom of Heaven in this world to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened*, Mat. xiii. 33. It is natural and reasonable to suppose, that the whole world should finally be given to Christ, as one whose right it is to reign, as the proper heir of him, who is originally the king of all nations, and the possessor of heaven and earth: And the scripture teaches us, that God the father hath constituted his son, as Godman, and in his kingdom of grace, or mediatorial kingdom, to be the heir of the world, that he might in this kingdom have the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost ends of the earth for his possession; Heb. i. 2, and ii. 8. Psal. ii. 6, 7, 8. Thus Abraham is said to be the heir of the world, not in himself, but in his seed, which is Christ; Rom. iv. 13. And how was this to be fulfilled to Abraham, but by God's fulfilling that great promise, that *in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed?* For that promise is what the apostle is speaking of; which shews, that God has appointed Christ to be the heir of the world in his kingdom of grace, and to possess and reign over all nations, through the propagation of his gospel, and the power of his spirit communicating the blessings of it. God hath appointed him to this universal dominion by a most

solemn oath ; Isa. xlv. 23. " I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Compared with Phil. ii. 10, 11. Though this solemn oath of God the father is to be undersood in so comprehensive a sense, as to extend to what shall be accomplished at the day of judgment, yet it is evident by the foregoing and following verses, that the thing most directly intended, is what shall be fulfilled by the spreading of the gospel of his salvation, and power of the spirit of grace, bringing " all the ends of the earth to look to him that they may be saved, and come to him for righteousness and strength, that in him they might be justified, and might glory." God has suffered many earthly princes to extend their conquests over a great part of the face of the earth, and to possess a dominion of vast extent, and one monarchy to conquer and succeed another, the latter being still the greater : It is reasonable to suppose that a much greater glory in this respect should be reserved for Christ, God's own son and rightful heir, who has purchased the dominion by so great and hard a service : It is reasonable to suppose, that his dominion should be far the largest, and his conquests vastly the greatest and most extensive. And thus the scriptures represent the matter, in Nebuchadnezzar's vision, and the prophet's interpretation, Dan. ii. " There the four great monarchies of the earth, one succeeding another, are represented by the great image of gold, silver, brass, iron and clay ; but at last a stone cut of the mountain without hands, smites the image upon his feet, which breaks the iron, clay, brass, silver and gold in pieces, that all becomes as the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carries them away, that no place is found for them ; but the stone waxes great, becoms a great mountain, and fills the whole earth ; signifying the kingdom which the Lord God of heaven should set up in the world, last of all, which should break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms." Surely this representation leads us to suppose, that this last kingdom shall be of vastly greater extent than any of the preceding. The like representation is made in the 7th chap. of Daniel ; there the four monarch-

ies are represented by four great beasts that arose successively, one conquering and subduing another; the fourth and last of these is said to be dreadful, and terrible, and strong exceedingly, and to have great iron teeth, and to devour and break in pieces, and stamp the residue with his feet; yea it is said, ver. 23, that the kingdom represented by this beast shall devour the whole earth; but last of all one like the Son of Man appears, *coming to the ancient of days, and being brought near before him, and receiving of him a dominion, and glory, and a kingdom that all people, nations, and languages should serve him.* This last circumstance, of the vast extent and universality of his dominion, is manifestly spoken of as one thing greatly distinguishing his holy kingdom from all the preceding monarchies: Although of one of the former it was said, that it should devour the whole earth, yet we are naturally led, both by the much greater emphasis and strength of the expressions, as well as by the whole connexion and tenor of the prophecy, to understand the universality here expressed in a much more extensive and absolute sense: And the terms used in the interpretation of this vision are such, that scarcely any can be devised more strong, to signify an absolute universality of dominion over the inhabitants of the face of the earth; ver. 27. "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the most high God. Agreeably to this the gospel is represented as *preached unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and tongue, and kindred, and people*, Rev. xiv. 6. The universality of the prevalence of true religion in the latter days, is sometimes expressed by its reaching to "the utmost ends of the earth," Psal. ii. 8. "To all the ends of the earth, and of the world," Psal. xxii. 27..... lxvii. 7....xcviii. 3. Isa. xlv. 22. "All the ends of the earth, with those that are far off upon the sea," Psal. lxv. 5. "From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same," Psal. cxiii. 3. Mal. i. 11. "The outgoings of the morning and of the evening," Psal. lxv. 8. It seems that all the most strong expressions, that were in use among the Jews to signify the habitable world in its utmost extent, are made use of to sig-

the extent of the church of God in the latter days: And in many places, a variety of these expressions is used, and there is an accumulation of them, expressed with great force.

It would be unreasonable to say, these are only bold figures, used after the manner of the eastern nations, to express the great extent of the Christian church, at and after the days of Constantine: To say so would be in effect to say, that it would have been impossible for God, if he had desired it, plainly to have foretold any thing that should absolutely have extended to all nations of the earth. I question whether it be possible to find out a more strong expression, to signify an absolute universality of the knowledge of the true religion through the habitable world, than that in Isa. xi. 9. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas." Which is as much as to say, As there is no place in the vast ocean where there is not water, so there shall be no part of the world of mankind where there is not the knowledge of the Lord; as there is no part of the wide bed or cavity possessed by the sea, but what is covered with water, so there shall be no part of the habitable world that shall not be covered with the light of the gospel, and possessed by the true religion. Waters are often in prophecy put for nations and multitudes of people: So the waters of the main ocean seem sometimes to be put for the inhabitants of the earth in general; as in Ezekiel's vision of waters of the sanctuary (Ezek. xlvii.) which flowed from the sanctuary, and ran east, until they came to the ocean, and were at first a small stream, but continually increased until they became a great river; and when they came to the sea, the water even of the vast ocean was healed (ver. 8.) representing the conversion of the world to the true religion in the latter days. It seems evident, that the time will come, when there will not be one nation remaining in the world, which shall not embrace the true religion, in that God has expressly revealed, that no one such nation shall be left standing on the earth; Isai. lx. 12. "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." God has declared that heathen idolatry and all the worship of false

gods shall be wholly abolished, in the most universal manner, so that it shall be continued in no place under the heavens, or upon the face of the earth; Jer. x. 11. "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens." Ver. 15. "They are vanity, and the work of errors, in the time of their visitation they shall perish." This must be understood as what shall be brought to pass while this earth and these heavens remain, i. e. before the end of the world. Agreeable to this is that, Isa. liv. 1, 2. "Sing, O barren, and thou that didst not bear; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord; enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitation; spare not; lengthen thy cords, strengthen thy stakes." Ver. 5. "For thy Maker is thy husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called."

The prophecies of the New Testament do no less evidently shew, that a time will come when the gospel shall universally prevail, and the kingdom of Christ be extended over the whole habitable earth, in the most proper sense. Christ says, John xii. 32. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." It is fit, that when the son of God becomes man, he should have dominion over all mankind: It is fit that since he became an inhabitant of the earth, and shed his blood on the earth, he should possess the whole earth: It is fit, seeing here he became a servant, and was subject to men, and was arraigned before them, and judged, condemned and executed by them, and suffered ignominy and death in a most public manner, before Jews and Gentiles, being lifted up to view on the cross upon an hill, near that populous city Jerusalem, at a most public time, when there were many hundred thousand spectators, from all parts, that he should be rewarded with an universal dominion over mankind; and it is here declared he shall be. The apostle, in the 11th of Romans, teaches us to look to that great outpouring of the Spirit, and ingathering of souls into Christ's kingdom, that was in those days, first of the Jews, and then of the Gentiles, to be

but as the first fruits of the intended harvest, both with regard to Jews and Gentiles, and to look on the ingathering of those first fruits as a sign that all the remainder both of Jews and Gentiles should in due time be gathered in; ver. 16. "For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches." And in that context, the apostle speaks of the fullness of both Jews and Gentiles, as what shall hereafter be brought in, as distinct from that ingathering from among both, that was in those primitive ages of Christianity: In ver. 12, we read of the fulness of the Jews, and in the 25th of the fulness of the Gentiles: And there in ver. 30, 31, 32, the apostle teaches us to look upon that infidelity and darkness, that first prevailed over all Gentile nations, before Christ came, and then over the Jews after Christ came, as what was wisely permitted of God, as a preparation for the manifestation of the glory of God's mercy, in due time, on the whole world, constituted of Jews and Gentiles. *God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.* These things plainly shew, that the time is coming when the whole world of mankind shall be brought into the church of Christ; and not only a part of the Jews, and a part of the Gentile world, as the first fruits, as it was in the first ages of the Christian church; but the fullness of both, the whole lump, all the nation of the Jews, and all the world of Gentiles.

In the last great conflict between the church of Christ and her enemies, before the commencement of the glorious time of the church's peace and rest, *The kings of the earth, and the whole world, are represented as gathered together*, Rev. xvi. 14, and then the "seventh angel pours out his vial into the air," which limits that kingdom that Satan has, as god of this world, in its utmost extent; and that kingdom is represented as utterly overthrown, ver. 17, &c. And in another description of that great battle, chap. xix. Christ is represented as riding forth, having on his head many crowns, and on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.* Which we may well suppose signifies, that he is now going to that conquest, whereby he shall set up a kingdom, in which he shall be King of Kings, in a far more extensive manner

than either the Babylonish, Persian, Grecian, or Roman monarchs were. And in ver. 17, and following, "an angel appears standing in the sun, that overlooks the whole world, calling on all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, to come and eat the flesh of kings," &c. And in consequence of the great victory Christ gains at that time, *an angel comes down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand, and lays hold on the devil, and binds him, and casts him into the bottomless pit, and shuts him up, and sets a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more.* Satan, being dispossessed of that highest monarchy on earth, the Roman empire, and cast out in the time of Constantine, is represented chap. xii. by his being cast down from heaven to the earth: But now there is something far beyond that; he is cast out of the earth, and is shut up in hell, and confined to that alone, so that he has no place left him in this world of mankind, high nor low.

Now will any be so unreasonable as to say, that all these things do not signify more than that one third part of the world should be brought into the church of Christ; beyond which it cannot be pretended that the Christian religion has ever yet reached, in its greatest extent? Those countries, which belonged to the Roman empire, that were brought to the profession of Christianity, after the reign of Constantine, are but a small part of what the habitable world now is; as to extent of ground, they all together bear, I suppose, no greater proportion to it, than the land of Canaan did to the Roman empire. And our Redeemer in his kingdom of grace has hitherto possessed but a little part of the world, in its most flourishing state, since arts are risen to their greatest height; and a very great part of the world is but lately discovered, and much remains undiscovered to this day.

These things make it very evident, that the main fulfilment of those prophecies, that speak of the glorious advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth, is still to come.

And as there has been nothing as yet, with regard to the flourishing of religion, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom, of such extent as to answer the prophecies, so neither

has there been any thing of that duration, that is foretold.... The prophecies speak of Jerusalem's being made *the joy of of the whole earth*, and also the *joy of many generations* (Psal. xlviii. 2, Isa. lx. 15.) That *God's people should long enjoy the work of their hands*, (Isa. lxv. 22.) That they should *reign with Christ a thousand years* (Rev. xx.) by which we must at least understand a very long time. But it would be endless to mention all the places, which signify that the time of the church's great peace and prosperity should be of long continuance: Almost all the prophecies that speak of her latter day glory, imply it; and it is implied in very many of them, that when once this day of the church's advancement and peace is begun, it shall never end, till the world ends; or, at least, that there shall be no more a return of her troubles and adversity for any considerable continuance; that then *the days of her mourning shall be ended*; that her tribulations *should then be as the waters of Noah unto God, that as he has sworn that the waters of Noah should no more pass over the earth, so he will swear that he will no more be wroth with his people, or rebuke them*; that *God's people should no more walk after the imagination of their evil heart*; that *God would hide himself no more from the house of Israel, because he has poured out his Spirit upon them*; that *their sun should no more go down, nor the moon withdraw itself*; that *the light should not be clear and dark* (i. e. there should be no more an interchange of light and darkness, as used to be) but that it *should be* all *one* continued *day; not day and night* (for so the words are in the original in Zech. xiv. 7) alternately, *but it shall come to pass, that at evening time* (i. e. at the time that night and darkness used to be) *it shall be light*; and that *the nations should beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and that nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor learn war any more*; but that there *should be abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth*. And innumerable things of this nature are declared.

But the church of Christ has never yet enjoyed a state of peace and prosperity for any long time; on the contrary, the times of her rest, and of the flourishing state of religion, have ever been very short. Hitherto the church may say as in Isa.

lxiii. 17, 18. "Return, for thy servants sake, the tribes of thine inheritance; the people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while." The quietness that the church of God enjoyed after the beginning of Constantine's reign, was very short; the peace the empire enjoyed, in freedom from war, was not more than twenty years; no longer nor greater than it had enjoyed under some of the heathen emperors. After this the empire was rent in pieces by intestine wars, and wasted almost every where by the invasions and incursions of barbarous nations, and the Christian world was soon all in contention and confusion, by heresies and divisions in matters of religion. And the church of Christ has never as yet been for any long time, free from persecution; especially when truth has prevailed, and true religion flourished. It is manifest, that hitherto the people of God have been kept under, and Zion has been in a low afflicted state, and her enemies have had the chief sway.

And another thing, that makes it exceeding manifest that that day of the church's greatest advancement on earth, which is foretold in scripture, has never yet come, is, that it is so plainly and expressly revealed that this day should succeed the last of the four monarchies, even the Roman, in its last state, wherein it is divided into ten kingdoms, and after the destruction of Antichrist, signified by the little horn, whose reign is contemporary with the reign of the ten kings. These things are very plain in the 2d and 7th chapters of Daniel, and also in the Revelation of St. John. And it is also plain by the 11th chapter of Romans, that it shall be after the national conversion of the *Jews*, *which shall be as life from the dead to the Gentiles*, and the *fulness of both Jews and Gentiles should be come in*, and all the nation of the Jews and all other nations shall obtain mercy, and there shall be that general ingathering of the harvest of the whole earth, of which all that had been converted before, either of Jews or Gentiles, were but the first fruits. And many other evidences of this point might be mentioned, which for brevity's sake I omit.

And thus it is meet, that the last kingdom which shall take place on earth, should be the kingdom of God's own Son and

heir, whose right it is to rule and reign; and that whatever revolutions and confusions there may be in the world, for a long time, the cause of truth, the righteous cause, should finally prevail, and God's holy people should at last inherit the earth, and reign on earth; and that the world should continue in tumults and great revolutions, following one another, from age to age, the world being as it were in travail, until truth and holiness are brought forth; that all things should be shaken, until that comes which is true and right, and agreeable to the mind of God, which cannot be shaken; and that the wisdom of the Ruler of the world should be manifested in the bringing all things ultimately to so good an issue. The world is made for the Son of God; his kingdom is the end of all changes, that come to pass in the state of the world of mankind; all are only to prepare the way for this; it is fit therefore that the last kingdom on earth should be his. It is wisely and mercifully ordered of God that it should be so, on this account, as well as many others, viz. that the church of God, under all preceding changes, should have this consideration to encourage her, and maintain her hope, and animate her faith and prayers, from generation to generation, that God has promised, her cause should finally be maintained and prevail in this world.

Let it now be considered,

2. The future promised advancement of the kingdom of Christ is an event unspeakably happy and glorious. The scriptures speak of that time, as a time wherein God and His Son Jesus Christ will be most eminently glorified on earth; a time, wherein God, who until then had dwelt between the cherubims, and concealed himself in the holy of holies, in the secret of his tabernacle, behind the vail, in the thick darkness, should openly shine forth, and all flesh should see his glory, and God's people in general have as great a privilege as the high priest alone had once a year, or as Moses had in the mount; a time, wherein *the temple of God in heaven should be opened, and there should be seen the ark of His testament;* (Rev. xi. 19) a time, wherein both God will be greatly glorified, and

his saints made unspeakably happy in the view of his glory; a time, wherein God's people should not only once see the light of God's glory, as Moses, or see it once a year with the high priest, but should dwell and walk continually in it, and it should be their constant daily light, instead of the light of the sun, (Isa. ii. 5. Psal. lxxxix. 15. Isa. lx. 19) which light should be so much more glorious than the light of the sun or moon, that *the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts should reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem before his ancients gloriously;* Isa. xxiv. 23.

It is represented as a time of vast increase of knowledge and understanding, especially in divine things; a time wherein God would "destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail spread over all nations," Isa. xxv. 7. wherein "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun seven fold," Isa. xxx. 26. "And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the heart of the rash shall understand knowledge," Isa. xxxii. 3, 4. "And they shall no more teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord, because they shall know him from the least to the greatest," Jer. xxxi. 24. And a time of general holiness, (Isa. lx. 30. "Thy people shall be all righteous.") And a time of a great prevailing of eminent holiness, when little children should, in spiritual attainments, be as though they were "an hundred years old," Isa. lxv. 20. And wherein "he that is feeble among God's people should be as David," Zech. xii. 8. A time wherein holiness should be as it were inscribed on every thing, on all men's common business and employments, and the common utensils of life, all shall be dedicated to God, and improved to holy purposes; (Isa. xxiii. 18. "And her merchandize and hire shall be holiness to the Lord." Zech. xiv. 20, 21. "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lords house shall be like the bowls before the altar; yea every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of Hosts.") A time wherein religion and true Christianity shall in every respect be uppermost in the world; wherein God will cause his church to *arise and*

shake herself from the dust, and put on her beautiful garments, and sit down on a throne; and *the poor shall be raised from the dust, and the beggar from the dunghill, and shall be set among princes, and made to inherit the throne of God's glory:* A time wherein vital piety shall take possession of thrones and palaces, and those that are in most exalted stations shall be eminent in holiness. Isa. xlix. 23. "And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers." Chap. lx. 16. "Thou shalt suck the breasts of kings." Isa. xlv. 12. "The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift, the rich among the people shall entreat thy favor." A time of wonderful union, and the most universal peace, love and sweet harmony; wherein the nations shall *beat their swords into ploughshares*, &c. and God will *cause, wars to cease to the ends of the earth, and break the bow, and cut the spear in sunder, and burn the chariot in the fire; and the mountains shall bring forth peace to God's people, and the little hills by righteousness;* wherein *the wolf should dwell with the lamb*, &c. and wherein *God's people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and quiet resting places;* (Isa. xxxii. 17, 18, and xxxiii. 20, 21) a time wherein all heresies and false doctrines shall be exploded, and the church of God shall not be rent with a variety of jarring opinions. Zech. xiv. 9. "The Lord shall be king over all the earth: In that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one." And all superstitious ways of worship shall be abolished, and all agree in worshipping God in his own appointed way, and agreeable to the purity of his institutions; Jer. xxxii. 39. "I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them and their children after them;" a time wherein the whole earth shall be united as one holy city, one heavenly family, men of all nations shall as it were dwell together, and sweetly correspond one with another, as brethren and children of the same father; as the prophecies often speak of all God's people at that time as the children of God, and brethren one to another, all *appointing over them one head*, gathered to one *house of God, to worship the King, the Lord of hosts*; a time wherein this whole great society shall appear in glorious

beauty, in genuine amiable Christianity, and excellent order, as *a city compact together, the perfection of beauty, an eternal excellency*, shining with a reflection of the glory of Jehovah *risen upon it*, which shall be attractive and ravishing to all kings and nations, and it shall appear *as a bride adorned for her husband*; a time of great temporal prosperity; of great health, (Isa. xxxiii. 24. "The inhabitants shall not say, I am sick") of long life; Isa. lxv. 22. "As the days of a tree, are the days of my people;" a time wherein the earth shall be abundantly fruitful; (Psal. lxvii. 6, Isa. xxx. 23, 24, Amos ix. 16, and many other places.) A time wherein the world shall be delivered from that multitude of sore calamities that before had prevailed, (Ezek. xlvii. 20) and there shall be an universal blessing of God upon mankind, in soul and body, and in all their concerns, and all manner of tokens of God's presence and favor, and *God shall rejoice over them as the bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride*, and *the mountains shall as it were drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk*; Joel iii. 18. A time of great and universal joy through the earth, when *from the utmost ends of the earth shall be heard songs, even glory to the righteous*, and God's people shall with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation, and God shall prepare in his holy mountain, a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the Lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the Lees well refined, which feast is represented, Rev. xix. as *the marriage supper of the Lamb*. Yea, the scriptures represent it not only as a time of universal joy on earth, but extraordinary joy in heaven, among the angels and saints, the holy apostles and prophets there; Rev. xviii. 20, and xix. 1.....9. Yea, the scriptures represent it as a time of extraordinary rejoicing with Christ himself, the glorious head, in whom all things in heaven and earth shall then be gathered together in one; Zech. iii. 17. "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing." And the very fields, trees and mountains, shall then as it were rejoice, and break forth into singing; Isa. lv. 12. "Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains

and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." Isa. xliv. 23. "Sing, O heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains; O forest, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

Such being the state of things in this future promised glorious day of the churches prosperity, surely it is worth praying for. Nor is there any one thing whatsoever, if we viewed things aright, which a regard to the glory of God, a concern for the kingdom and honor of our Redeemer, a love to his people, pity to perishing sinners, love to our fellow creatures in general, compassion to mankind under its various and sore calamities and miseries, a desire of their temporal and spiritual prosperity, love to our country, our neighbors and friends, yea, and to our own souls, would dispose us to be so much in prayer for, as for the dawning of this happy day, and the accomplishment of that glorious event.

It may be worthy to be considered,

3. How much Christ prayed and labored and suffered, in order to the glory and happiness of that day.

The sum of the blessings Christ sought, by what he did and suffered in the work of redemption, was the *Holy Spirit*. So is the affair of our redemption constituted; the Father provides and gives the Redeemer, and the price of redemption is offered to him, and he grants the benefit purchased; the Son is the Redeemer that gives the price, and also is the price offered; and the Holy Spirit is the grand blessing obtained by the price offered, and bestowed on the redeemed. The Holy Spirit, in his indwelling, his influences and fruits, is the sum of all grace, holiness, comfort and joy; or in one word, of all the spiritual good Christ purchased for men in this world: And is also the sum of all perfection, glory and eternal joy, that he purchased for them in another world. The Holy Spirit is that great benefit, that is the subject matter of the promises, both of the eternal covenant of redemption, and also of the covenant of grace; the grand subject of the prom-

ises of the Old Testament, in the prophecies of the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom ; and the chief subject of the promises of the New Testament ; and particularly of the covenant of grace delivered by Jesus Christ to his disciples, as his last will and testament, in the xiv. xv. and xvi. chapters of John ; the grand legacy that he bequeathed to them in that his last and dying discourse with them. Therefore the Holy Spirit is so often called the spirit of promise, and emphatically the promise, the promise of the Father, &c. Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 4, and ii. 33, 39. Gal. iii. 14. Eph. i. 13, and iii. 6. This being the great blessing Christ purchased by his labors and sufferings on earth, it was the blessing he received of the Father, when he ascended into heaven, and entered into the holy of holies with his own blood, to communicate to those that he had redeemed. John xvi. 7. " It is expedient for you, that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Acts ii. 33. " Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." This is the sum of those gifts, which Christ received for men, even for the rebellious, at his ascension. This is the sum of the benefits Christ obtains for men by his intercession ; John xiv. 16, 17. " I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever ; even the Spirit of Truth." Herein consists Christ's communicative fullness, even in his being full of the Spirit, and so full of grace and truth, that we might of this fulness receive, and grace for grace. He is anointed with the Holy Ghost ; and this is the ointment that goes down from the head to the members. God gives the Spirit not by measure unto him, that every one that is his might receive according to the measure of the gift of Christ. This therefore was the great blessing he prayed for in that wonderful prayer, that he uttered for his disciples and all his future church, the evening before he died, John xvii : The blessing he prayed for to the Father, in behalf of his disciples, was the same he had insisted on in his preceding discourse with them : And this doubtless was the blessing that he pray-

ed for, when, as our High Priest, he offered up strong crying and tears, with his blood, Heb. v. 6, 7. The same that he shed his blood for, he also shed tears for, and poured out prayers for.

But the time that we have been speaking of, is the chief time of the bestowment of this blessing; the main season of the success of all that Christ did and suffered in the work of our redemption. Before this the Spirit of God is given but very sparingly, and but few are saved; but then it will be far otherwise; wickedness shall be rare then, as virtue and piety had been before: And undoubtedly, by far the greatest number of them that ever receive the benefits of Christ's redemption, from the beginning of the world to the end of it, will receive it in that time. The number of the inhabitants of the earth will doubtless then be vastly multiplied; and the number of redeemed ones much more.

If we should suppose that glorious day to last no more than (literally) a thousand years, and that at the beginning of that thousand years the world of mankind should be but just as numerous as it is now, and that the number should be doubled, during that time of great health and peace and the universal blessing of heaven, once only in an hundred years, the number at the end of a thousand years would be more than a thousand times greater than it is now; and if it should be doubled once in fifty years (which probably the number of the inhabitants of Newengland has ordinarily been, in about half that time) then, at the end of the thousand years, there would be more than a million inhabitants on the face of the earth where there is one now. And there is reason to think that through the greater part of this period at least, the number of saints will, in their increase, bear a proportion to the increase of the number of inhabitants. And it must be considered, that if the number of mankind at the beginning of this period be no more than equal to the present number, yet we may doubtless conclude, that the number of true saints will be immensely greater; when instead of the few true and thorough Christians now in some few countries, every nation on the face of the whole earth shall be converted to Christianity, and every

country shall be full of true Christians; so that the successive multiplication of true saints through the thousand years, will begin with that vast advantage, beyond the multiplication of mankind; where the latter is begun from units, the other doubtless will begin with hundreds, if not thousands. How much greater then will be the number of true converts, that will be brought to a participation of the benefits of Christ's redemption, during that period, than in all other times put together? I think the foregoing things considered, we shall be very moderate in our conjectures, if we say, it is probable that there will be an hundred thousand times more, that will naturally be redeemed to God by Christ's blood, during that period of the church's prosperity that we have been speaking of, than ever had been before, from the beginning of the world to that time.

That time is represented in scripture, as the proper appointed season of Christ's salvation; eminently the elect season, *the accepted time*, and *day of salvation* (Isai. xlix. 8, and so on to ver. 23, and chap. lxi. 2, taken with the context, in that and the preceding and following chapters.) *The year of Christ's redeemed*, Isa. lxiii. 4. This period is spoken of as the proper time of the dominion of the Redeemer, and reign of his redeeming love, in the 2d and 7th Chapters of Daniel, and many other places; the proper time of his harvest, or ingathering of his fruits from this fallen world; the appointed day of his triumph over Satan, the great destroyer; and the appointed day of his marriage with his elect spouse; Rev. xix. 7. The time given to the Sun of righteousness to rule, as the day is the time God has appointed for the natural Sun to bear rule. Therefore the bringing on of this time is called Christ's coming in his kingdom; wherein *he will rent the heavens and come down*, and *the Sun of righteousness shall arise*. Mal. iv. 2, and Isa. lx. 1.

The comparatively little saving good there is in the world, as the fruit of Christ's redemption, before that time, is, as it were, granted by way of anticipation; as we anticipate something of the sun's light by reflection before the daytime, the proper time of the sun's rule; and as the first fruits are gath-

ered before the harvest. Then more especially will be the fulfilment of those great promises, made by God the father to the son, for his pouring out his soul unto death, Isa. liii. 10, 11, 12; then "shall he see his seed, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand; then shall he see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied, and shall justify many by his knowledge; then will God divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;" then shall Christ in an eminent manner obtain his chosen spouse, that "he loved and died for, that he might sanctify and cleanse her, with the washing of water, by the word, and present her to himself a glorious church." He will obtain "the joy that was set before him, for which he endured the cross, and despised the shame," chiefly in the events and consequences of that day: That day as was observed before, is often represented as eminently the time of the rejoicing of the bridegroom. The foreknowledge and consideration of it was what supported him, and that which his soul exulted in, at a time when his soul had been troubled at the view of his approaching sufferings; as may be seen in John xii. 23, 24, 27, 31, 32.

Now therefore, if it be so, that this is what Jesus Christ, our great Redeemer and the head of the church, did so much desire, and set his heart upon, from all eternity, and which he did and suffered so much for, offering up strong crying and tears, and his precious blood to obtain it; surely his disciples and members should also earnestly seek it, and be much and earnest in prayer for it.

Let it be considered,

4. The whole creation is, as it were, earnestly waiting for that day, and constantly groaning and travailing in pain to bring forth the felicity and glory of it. For that day is above all other times, excepting the day of judgment, the day of the manifestation of the Sons of God, and of their glorious liberty: And therefore that elegant representation the apostle makes of the earnest expectation and travail of the creation, in Rom. viii. 19.....22, is applicable to the glorious events of this day: "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God. For the creature

was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." This visible world has now for many ages been subjected to sin, and made as it were a servant to it, through the abusive improvement that man, who has the dominion over the creatures, puts the creatures to. Thus the sun is a sort of servant to all manner of wickedness, as its light and other beneficial influences are abused by men, and made subservient to their lusts and sinful purposes. So of the rain, and fruits of the earth, and the brute animals, and all other parts of the visible creation; they all serve men's corruption, and obey their sinful will; and God doth in a sort subject them to it; for he continues his influence and power to make them to be obedient, according to the same law of nature whereby they yield to men's command when used to good purposes. It is by the immediate influence of God upon things, acting upon them, according to those constant methods that we call the laws of nature, that they are ever obedient to man's will, or that we can use them at all. This influence of God continues, to make them obedient to men's will, though wicked. Which is a sure sign that the present state of things is not lasting: It is confusion; and God would not suffer it to be, but that he designs in a little time to put an end to it, when it shall no more be so. Seeing it is to be but a little while, God chooses rather to subject the creature to man's wickedness, than to disturb and interrupt the course of nature according to its stated laws: But it is, as it were, a force upon the creature; for the creature is abused in it, perverted to far meaner purposes than those for which the author of its nature made it, and to which he adapted it. The creature therefore is as it were unwillingly subject; and would not be subject, but that it is but for a short time; and it, as it were, hopes for an alteration. It is a bondage the creature is subject to, from which it was partly delivered when Christ came, and the gospel was promulgated in the world,

and will be more fully delivered at the commencement of the glorious day we are speaking of; and perfectly at the day of judgment. This agrees with the context; for the apostle was speaking of the present suffering state of the church. The reason why the church in this world is in a suffering state, is that the world is subjected to the sin and corruption of mankind. By vanity, in scripture, is very commonly meant sin and wickedness; and also by corruption, as might be shewn in very many places, would my intended brevity allow.

Though the creature is thus subject to vanity, yet it does not rest in this subjection, but is constantly acting and exerting itself, in order to that glorious liberty that God has appointed at the time we are speaking of, and as it were reaching forth towards it. All the changes that are brought to pass in the world, from age to age, are ordered in infinite wisdom in one respect or other to prepare the way for that glorious issue of things, that shall be when truth and righteousness shall finally prevail, and he, whose right it is, shall take the kingdom. All the creatures, in all their operations and motions continually tend to this. As in a clock, all the motions of the whole system of wheels and movements, tend to the striking of the hammar at the appointed time. All the revolutions and restless motions of the sun and other heavenly bodies, from day to day, from year to year, and from age to age, are continually tending hither; as all the many turnings of the wheels of a chariot, in a journey, tend to the appointed journey's end. The mighty struggles and conflicts of nations, and shakings of kingdoms, and those vast successive changes that are brought to pass, in the kingdoms and empires of the world, from one age to another, are as it were travail pangs of the creation, in order to bring forth this glorious event. And the scriptures represent the last struggles and changes that shall immediately precede this event, as being the greatest of all; as the last pangs of a woman in travail are the most violent.

The creature thus earnestly expecting this glorious manifestation and liberty of the children of God, and travailing in pain in order to it, therefore the scriptures, by a like figure,

do very often represent, that when this shall be accomplished, the whole inanimate creation shall greatly rejoice: That the *heavens shall sing, the earth be glad, the mountains break forth into singing, the hills be joyful together, the trees clap their hands, the lower parts of the earth shout, the sea roar and the fulness thereof, and the floods clap their hands*, Isa. xliv. 23....xlix. 13. Psal. lxix. 34, 35....xcvi. 11, 12, and xcviii. 7, 8.

All the intelligent elect creation, all God's holy creatures in heaven and earth, are truly and properly waiting for, and earnestly expecting that event. It is abundantly represented in scripture as the spirit and character of all true saints, that they set their hearts upon, love, long, wait and pray for the promised glory of that day; they are spoken of as those that prefer Jerusalem *to their chief joy*, Psal. cxxxvii. 6. *That take pleasure in the stones of Zion, and favor the dust thereof*, Psal. cii. 13, 14. *That wait for the consolation of Israel*, Luke ii. 25, and v. 38. It is the language of the church of God, and the breathing of the soul of every true saint, that we have in Psal. xiv. 7. "O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad." And Cant. ii. 17. "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young heart upon the mountains of Bether." And chap. viii. 14. "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices." Agreeable to this, was the spirit of old Jacob, which he expressed when he was dying, in faith in the great promise made to him and Isaac and Abraham, that "in their seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, Gen. xlix. 18. "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." The same is represented as the spirit of his true children, or the family of Jacob, Isa. viii. 17. "I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth himself from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him." They that love Christ's appearing, is a name that the apostle gives to true Christians, 2 Tim. iv. 8.

The glorious inhabitants of the heavenly world, the saints and angels there, that rejoice when one sinner repents, are earnestly waiting, in an assured and joyful dependence on

God's promises of that conversion of the world, and marriage of the Lamb, which shall be when that glorious day comes; and therefore they are represented as all with one accord rejoicing and praising God with such mighty exultation and triumph, when it is accomplished, in Rev. xix.

5. The word of God is full of precepts, encouragements, and examples, tending to excite and induce the people of God to be much in prayer for this mercy.

The Spirit of God is the chief of the blessings, that are the subject matter of Christian prayer; for it is the sum of all spiritual blessings; which are those that we need infinitely more than all others, and are those wherein our true and eternal happiness consists. That which is the sum of the blessings that Christ purchased, is the sum of the blessings that Christians have to pray for; but that as was observed before, is the Holy Spirit: And therefore when the disciples came to Christ, and desired him to teach them to pray, Luke xi. and he accordingly gave them particular directions for the performance of this duty, the conclusion of his whole discourse in the 13th verse plainly shews that the Holy Spirit is the sum of the blessings that are the subject matter of that prayer about which he had instructed them. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" From which words of Christ, we may also observe, that there is no blessing that we have so great encouragement to pray for, as the Spirit of God; the words imply that our heavenly Father is especially ready to bestow his Holy Spirit on them that ask him. Of the more excellent nature any benefit is that we stand in need of, the more ready God is to bestow it in answer to prayer: The infinite goodness of God's nature is the more gratified, and the grand design and aim of the contrivance and work of our redemption is the more answered, and Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, has the greater success in his undertaking and labors; and those desires that are expressed in prayer for the most excellent blessings are the most excellent desires, and consequently such as God most approves, and is most ready to gratify.

The scriptures do not only direct and encourage us in general to pray for the Holy Spirit above all things else, but it is the expressly revealed will of God, that his church should be very much in prayer for that glorious outpouring of the Spirit that is to be in the latter days, and the things that shall be accomplished by it. God, speaking of that blessed event, Ezek. xxxvi. under the figure of "cleansing the house of Israel from all their iniquities, planting and building their waste and ruined places, and making them to become like the garden of Eden, and filling them with men like a flock, like the holy flock, the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts," (wherein he doubtless has respect to the same glorious restoration and advancement of his church that is spoken of in the next chapter, and in all the following chapters to the end of the book) he says, ver. 37. "Thus saith the Lord, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." Which doubtless implies that it is the will of God that extraordinary prayerfulness in his people for this mercy should precede the bestowment of it.

I know of no place in the Bible, where so strong an expression is made use of to signify importunity in prayer, as is used in Isa. lxii. 6, 7, where the people of God are called upon to be importunate for this mercy: "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, until he establish, and until he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." How strong is the phrase! And how loud is this call to the church of God, to be fervent and incessant in their cries to him for this great mercy! How wonderful are the words to be used, concerning the manner in which such worms of the dust should address the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity! And what encouragement is here, to approach the mercy seat with the greatest freedom, boldness, earnestness, constancy and full assurance of faith, to seek of God this greatest thing that can be sought in Christian prayer!

It is a just observation of a certain eminent minister of the church of Scotland, in a discourse of his, lately published on social prayer, in which, speaking of pleading for the success of

the gospel, as required by the Lord's prayer, he says, "That notwithstanding of its being so compendious, yet the one half of it, that is, three petitions in six, and these the first prescribed, do all relate to this great case: So that to put up any one of these petitions apart, or all of them together, is upon the matter, to pray that the dispensation, of the gospel may be blessed with divine power." That glorious day we are speaking of is the proper and appointed time, above all others, for the bringing to pass the things requested in each of these petitions; As the propheeies every where represent that as the time, which God has especially appointed for the hallowing or glorifying his own great name in this world, causing his glory to be revealed, that all flesh may see it together, causing it openly to be manifested in the sight of the heathen, filling the whole world with the light of his glory to such a degree that the Moon shall be confounded and Sun ashamed before that brighter glory: The appointed time for the glorifying and magnifying the name of Jesus Christ, causing every knee to bow, and every tongue to confess to him. This is the proper time of God's kingdom's coming, or of Christ's coming in his kingdom: That is the very time foretold in the 2d of Daniel, when the Lord God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, in the latter times of the last monarchy, when it is divided into ten kingdoms: And that is the very time foretold in the 7th of Daniel, when there should be given to one like to the son of man, dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him; and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the Saints of the most high God, after the destruction of the little horn, that should continue for a time, times, and the dividing of time. And that is the time wherein God's will shall be done on earth, as it is done in heaven; when heaven shall as it were be bowed, and come down to the earth, as God's people shall be all righteous, and holiness to the Lord shall be written on the bells of the horses, &c. So that the three first petitions of the Lord's prayer are in effect no other than requests for the bringing on this glorious day. And as the

Lord's prayer begins with asking for this, in the three first petitions, so it concludes with it, in these words, *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.* Which words imply a request that God would take to himself his great power, and reign, and manifest his power and glory in the world. Thus Christ teaches us that it becomes his disciples to seek this above all other things, and make it the first and the last in their prayers, and that every petition should be put up in a subordination to the advancement of God's kingdom and glory in the world.

Besides what has been observed of the Lord's prayer, if we look through the whole Bible, and observe all the examples of prayer that we find there recorded, we shall find so many prayers for no other mercy, as for the deliverance, restoration and prosperity of the church, and the advancement of God's glory and kingdom of grace in the world. If we well consider the prayers that we find recorded in the book of Psalms, I believe we shall see reason to think, that a very great, if not the greater part of them, are prayers uttered, either in the name of Christ, or in the name of the church, for such a mercy: And undoubtedly the greatest part of that book of Psalms, is made up of prayers for this mercy, prophecies of it, and prophetical praises for it.

The prophets, in their prophecies of the restoration and advancement of the church, very often speak of it as what shall be done in answer to the prayers of God's people. Isa. xxv. 9.....xxvi. 9, 12, 13, 16, 17, to the end. Chap. xxxiii. 2. Psal. cii. 13.....22. Jer. iii. 21. Isa. lxv. 24.....xli. 17. Hos. v. 15, with vi. 1, 2, 3, and xiv. 2, to the end. Zech. x. 6..... xii. 10, and xiii. 9. Isa. lv. 6, with verse 12, 13. Jer. xxxiii. 3. The prophecies of future glorious times of the church are often introduced with a prayer of the church for her deliverance and advancement, prophetically uttered; as in Isa. li. 9, &c. Chap. lxiii. 11, to the end, and lxiv. throughout.

In order to Christ's being mystically born into the world, in the advancement and flourishing of true religion, and great increase of the number of true converts, who are spoken of as having Christ formed in them, the scriptures represent it as

requisite, that the church should first be in travail, crying, and pained to be delivered ; Rev. xii. 1, 2, 5. And one thing that we have good reason to understand by it, is her exercising strong desires, and wrestling and agonizing with God in prayer, for this event ; because we find such figures of speech used in this sense elsewhere ; so, Gal. iv. 19. "My little children of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." Isa. xxvi. 16, 17. "Lord, in trouble have they visited thee ; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them. Like a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs, so have we been in thy sight, O Lord." And certainly it is fit, that the church of God should be in travail for that, which (as I before observed) the whole creation travails in pain for.

The scriptures do not only abundantly manifest it to be the duty of God's people to be much in prayer for this great mercy, but it also abounds with manifold considerations to encourage them in it, and animate them with hopes of success. There is perhaps no one thing that so much of the Bible is taken up in the promises of, in order to encourage the faith, hope and prayers of the saints, as this ; which at once affords to God's people the clearest evidences that it is their duty to be much in prayer for this mercy (for undoubtedly that which God does abundantly make the subject of his promises, God's people should abundantly make the subject of their prayers) and also affords them the strongest assurances that their prayers shall be successful. With what confidence may we go before God, and pray for that, of which we have so many exceeding precious and glorious promises to plead ! The very first promise of God to fallen man, even that in Gen. iii. 15. It shall bruise thy head, is a promise that is to have its chief fulfilment at that day. And the whole Bible concludes with a promise of the glory of that day, and a prayer for its fulfilment. Rev. xxii. 20. "He that testifieth these things, saith, surely I come quickly : Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The scriptures give us great reason to think, that when once there comes to appear much of a spirit of prayer in the church of God for this mercy, then it will soon be accomplished. It is evidently with reference to this mercy, that God makes that promise, Isa. xli. 17, 18, 19. "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them; I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water; I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle and the oil tree, I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together." Spiritual waters and rivers are explained by the Apostle John, to be the Holy Spirit, John vii. 37, 38, 39. It is now a time of scarcity of these spiritual waters; there are as it were none: If God's people, in this time of great drought, were but made duly sensible of this calamity, and their own emptiness and necessity, and brought earnestly to thirst and cry for needed supplies, God would doubtless soon fulfil this blessed promise. We have another promise much like this, in Psal. cii. 16, 17. "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory; he will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." And remarkable are the words that follow in the next verse, "This shall be written for the generation to come; and the people which shall be created, shall praise the Lord." Which seems to signify, that this promise should be left on record to encourage some future generation of God's people to pray and cry earnestly for this mercy, to whom he would fulfil the promise, and thereby give them, and great multitudes of others, that should be converted through their prayers, occasion to praise his name. Who knows but that the generation here spoken of may be this present generation? One thing mentioned in the character of that future generation, is certainly true concerning the present, viz. that it is destitue; the church of God is in very low, sorrowful and needy circumstances: And if the next thing there supposed, were also verified in us, viz. that we

were made sensible of our great calamity, and brought to cry earnestly to God for help, I am persuaded the third would be also verified, viz. That our prayers would be turned into joyful praises, for God's gracious answers of our prayers. It is spoken of as a sign and evidence, that the time to favor Zion is come, when God's servants are brought by their prayerfulness for her restoration, in an eminent manner, to shew that they favor her stones and dust; in the 13th and 14th verses of this Psalm, "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favor her, yea, the set time is come; for thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof.

God has respect to the prayers of his saints in all his government of the world; as we may observe by the representation made, Rev. viii. at the beginning. There we read of seven angels standing before the throne of God, and receiving of him seven trumpets, at the sounding of which, great and mighty changes were to be brought to pass in the world, through many successive ages. But when these angels had received their trumpets, they must stand still, and all must be in silence, not one of them must be allowed to sound, until the prayers of the saints are attended to. The angel of the covenant, as a glorious High Priest, comes and stands at the altar, with much incense, to offer with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, before the throne; and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascends up with acceptance before God, out of the angel's hand: And then the angels prepare themselves to sound. And God, in the events of every trumpet, remembers those prayers: As appears at last, by the great and glorious things he accomplishes for his church, in the issue of all, in answer to these prayers, in the event of the last trumpet, which brings on the glory of the latter days, when these prayers shall be turned into joyful praises. Rev. xi. 15, 16, 17. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty Elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell

upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art and wast and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." Since it is thus, that it is the pleasure of God so to honor his people, as to carry on all the designs of his kingdom in this way, viz. by the prayers of his saints, this gives us great reason to think, that whenever the time comes that God gives an extraordinary spirit of prayer for the promised advancement of his kingdom on earth, (which is God's great aim in all preceding providences, and which is the main thing that the spirit of prayer in the saints aims at) then the fulfilling this event is nigh.

God, in wonderful grace, is pleased to represent himself as it were at the command of his people, with regard to mercies of this nature, so as to be ready to bestow them whenever they shall earnestly pray for them; Isa. xlv. 11. "Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, ask of me concerning things to come, concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands, command ye me." What God is speaking of in this context, is the restoration of his church; not only a restoration from temporal calamity and an outward captivity, by Cyrus; but also a spiritual restoration and advancement, by God's commanding the heavens to *drop down from above, and the skies to pour down righteousness, and causing the earth to open and bring forth salvation, and righteousness to spring up together*, Ver. 8. God would have his people ask of him, or inquire of him by earnest prayer, to do this for them; and manifests himself as being at the command of earnest prayers for such a mercy: And a reason why God is so ready to hear such prayers is couched in the words, viz. Because it is prayer for his own church, his chosen and beloved people, his sons and daughters, and the work of his hands; and he cannot deny any thing that is asked for their comfort and prosperity.

God speaks of himself as standing ready to be gracious to his church, and to appear for its restoration, and only waiting for such an opportunity to bestow this mercy, when he shall hear the cries of his people for it, that he may bestow it in

answer to their prayers. Isa. xxx. 18, 19. "Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious to thee; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: For the Lord is a God of judgment: Blessed are all they that wait for him. For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem. Thou shalt weep no more; he will be very gracious unto thee, at the voice of thy cry: When he shall hear it, he will answer thee." The words imply as much as that when God once sees his people much engaged in praying for this mercy, it shall be no longer delayed. Christ desires to hear the voice of his spouse, that is in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs; in a low and obscure state, driven into secret corners: He only waits for this, in order to put an end to her state of affliction, and cause the day to break, and the shadows to flee away. If he once heard her voice in earnest prayer, he would come swiftly over the mountains of separation between him and her, *as a roe, or young hart*; Sol. Song ii. 14, to the end. When his church is in a low state, and oppressed by her enemies, and cries to him, he will swiftly fly to her relief, as birds fly at the cry of their young; Isa. xxxi. 5. Yea, when that glorious day comes, that I am speaking of, *before they call, he will answer them, and while they are yet speaking, he will hear*; and in answer to their prayers, he will make the *wolf and the lamb feed together*, &c. Isa. lxv. 24, 25. When the spouse prays for the effusion of the Holy Spirit, and the coming of Christ, by granting the tokens of his spiritual presence in his church, saying, Cant. iv. 16. *Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out; let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits*; there seems to be an immediate answer to her prayer, in the next words, in abundant communications of the Spirit, and bestowment of spiritual blessings; *I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.*

Scripture instances and examples of success in prayer give great encouragement to pray for this mercy. Most of the remarkable deliverances and restorations of the church of God, that we have account of in the scripture, were in answer to prayer. So was the redemption of the church of God from the Egyptian bondage ; Exod. ii. 23, and iii. 7. The great restoration of the church in the latter day, is often spoken of as resembled by this ; as in Isa. lxiv. 1.....4....xi. 11, 15, 16..... xliii. 2, 3, 16....19....li. 10, 11, 15.....lxiii. 11, 12, 13. Zech. x. 10, 11. Hos. ii. 14, 15. It was in answer to prayer, that the Sun stood still over Gibeon, and the Moon in the valley Aijalon, and God's people obtained that great victory over their enemies ; in which wonderful miracle, God seemed to have some respect to a future more glorious event to be accomplished for the Christian church, in the day of her victory over her enemies, in the latter days ; even that event foretold, Isa. lx. 20. " Thy Sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy Moon withdraw itself. It was in answer to prayer, that God delivered his church from the mighty host of the Assyrians, in Hezekiah's time ; which dispensation is abundantly made use of, as a type of the great things God will do for the Christian church in the latter days, in the prophecies of Isaiah. The restoration of the church of God from the Babylonish captivity, as abundantly appears both by scripture prophecies and histories, was in answer to extraordinary prayer ; see Jer. xxix. 10.....14, and l. 4, 5. Dan. ix. throughout. Ezra. viii. 21, &c. Neh. i. 4, to the end.....iv. 4, 5, and Chap. ix. throughout. This restoration of the Jewish church, after the destruction of Babylon, is evidently a type of the glorious restoration of the Christian church, after the destruction of the kingdom of Antichrist ; which (as all know) is abundantly spoken of in the Revelation of St. John, as the antitype of Babylon. Sampson, out of weakness, received strength to pull down Dagon's temple, through prayer. So the people of God, in the latter days, will out of weakness be made strong, and will become the instruments of pulling down the kingdom of Satan, by prayer.

The Spirit of God was poured out upon Christ himself, in answer to prayer; Luke iii. 21, 22. "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove, upon him; and a voice came from heaven which said, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." The Spirit descends on the church of Christ, the same way in this respect, that it descended on the Head of the church. The greatest effusion of the Spirit that ever yet has been, even that which was in the primitive times of the Christian church, which began in Jerusalem on the day of pentecost, was in answer to extraordinary prayer. When the disciples were gathered together to their Lord, a little before his ascension, *he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which* (saith he) *ye have heard of me,*" i. e. the promise of the Holy Ghost; Acts i. 4. What they had their hearts upon was the restoration of the kingdom to Israel: *Lord* (say they) *wilt thou, at this time, restore again the kingdom to Israel?* ver. 6. And according to Christ's direction after his ascension, they returned to Jerusalem, and continued in united fervent prayer and supplication. It seems they spent their time in it from day to day, without ceasing; until the Spirit came down in a wonderful manner upon them, and that work was begun which never ceased, until the world was turned upside down, and all the chief nations of it were converted to Christianity. And that glorious deliverance and advancement of the Christian church, that was in the days of Constantine the great, followed the extraordinary cries of the church to God, as the matter is represented in Rev. vi. at the opening of the fifth seal. The church in her suffering state is represented crying with a loud voice, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge, and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" And the opening of the next seal brings on that mighty revolution, in the days of Constantine, compared to those great changes that shall be at the end of the world.

As there is so great and manifold reason from the word of God, to think that if a spirit of earnest prayer for that great ef-

fusion of the Spirit of God which I am speaking of prevailed, in the Christian church, the mercy would be soon granted; so those that are engaged in such prayer might expect the first benefit. God will come to those that are seeking him and waiting for him; Isa. xxv. 9. and xxvi. 8. When Christ came in the flesh, he was first revealed to them who were "waiting for the consolation of Israel, and looking for redemption in Jerusalem," Luke i. 25, 38. And in that great outpouring of the Spirit that was in the days of the apostles, attended with such glorious effects among Jews and Gentiles, the Spirit came down first on those that were engaged in united, earnest prayer for it. A special blessing is promised to them that love and pray for the prosperity of the church of God, Psal. cxxii. 6. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee."

7. We are presented with many motives in the dispensations of divine Providence, at this day, to excite us to be much in prayer for this mercy.

There is much in providence to shew us our need of it, and put us on desiring it. The great outward calamities, in which the world is involved; and particularly the bloody war that embroils and wastes the nations of Christendom, and in which our nation has so great a share, may well make all that believe God's word, and love mankind, earnestly long and pray for that day, when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares, &c. But especially do the spiritual calamities and miseries of the present time, shew our great need of that blessed effusion of God's Spirit: There having been, for so long a time, so great a withholding of the Spirit, from the greater part of the Christian world, and such dismal consequences of it, in the great decay of vital piety, and the exceeding prevalence of infidelity, heresy and all manner of vice and wickedness; and especially in our land and nation; of which a most affecting account has lately been published in a pamphlet printed in London, and reprinted in Scotland, entitled "Britain's Remembrancer;" by which it seems that luxury, and wickedness of

almost every kind, is well nigh come to the utmost extremity in the nation; and if vice should continue to prevail and increase for one generation more, as it has the generation past, it looks as though the nation could hardly continue in being, but must sink under the weight of its own corruption and wickedness. And the state of things in the other parts of the British dominions, besides England, is very deplorable. The church of Scotland has very much lost her glory, greatly departing from her ancient purity, and excellent order; and has of late been bleeding with great and manifold wounds, occasioned by their divisions and hot contentions. And there are frequent complaints from thence, by those that lament the corruptions of that land, of sin and wickedness, of innumerable kinds, abounding and prevailing of late, among all ranks and sorts of men there. And how lamentable is the moral and religious state of these American colonies? Of Newengland in particular? How much is that kind of religion that was professed and much experienced and practised, in the first, and apparently the best times of Newengland, grown and growing out of credit? What fierce and violent contentions have been of late among ministers and people, about things of a religious nature? How much is the gospel ministry grown into contempt? And the work of the ministry, in many respects, laid under uncommon difficulties, and even in danger of sinking amongst us? How many of our congregations and churches rending in pieces? Church discipline weakened, and ordinances less and less regarded? What wild and extravagant notions, gross delusions of the devil, and strange practices have prevailed, and do still prevail, in many places, under a pretext of extraordinary purity, spirituality, liberty and zeal against formality, usurpation, and conformity to the world? How strong and deeply rooted and general are the prejudices that prevail against vital religion and the power of godliness, and almost every thing that appertains to it, or tends to it? How apparently are the hearts of people, every where, uncommonly shut up against all means and endeavors to awaken sinners and revive religion? Vice and immorality, of all kinds, withal increasing and unusually prevailing? May not an at-

tentive view and consideration of such a state of things well influence the people that favor the dust of Zion, to earnestness in their cries to God for a general outpouring of his Spirit, which only can be an effectual remedy for these evils?

Besides the things that have been mentioned, the fresh attempts made by the antichristian powers against the Protestant interest, in their late endeavors to restore a Popish government in Greatbritain, the chief bulwark of the Protestant cause; as also the persecution lately revived against the Protestants in France, may well give occasion to the people of God, to renewed and extaordinary earnestness in their prayers to him, for the fulfilment of the promised downfall of Antichrist, and that liberty and glory of his church that shall follow.

As there is much in the present state of things to shew us our great need of his mercy, and to cause us to desire it; so there is very much to convince us that God alone can bestow it, and shew us our entire and absolute dependance on him for it. The insufficiency of human abilities to bring to pass any such happy change in the world as is foretold, or to afford any remedy to mankind, from such miseries as have been mentioned, does now remarkably appear. Those observations of the apostle, 1 Cor. i. "The world by wisdom knows not God, and God makes foolish the wisdom of this world," never were verified to such a degree as they are now. Great discoveries have been made in the arts and sciences, and never was human learning carried to such a height, as in the present age; and yet never did the cause of religion and virtue run so low in nations professing the true religion. Never was an age wherein so many learned and elaborate treatises have been written, in proof of the truth and divinity of the Christian religion; yet never were there so many infidels, among those that were brought up under the light of the gospel. It is an age, as is supposed, of great light, freedom of thought, and discovery of truth in matters of religion, and detection of the weakness and bigotry of our ancestors, and of the folly and absurdity of the notions of those that were accounted eminent divines in former generations; which notions, it is imagined,

did destroy the very foundations of virtue and religion, and enervate all precepts of morality, and in effect annul all difference between virtue and vice; and yet vice and wickedness did never so prevail, like an overflowing deluge. It is an age wherein those mean and stingy principles (as they are called) of our forefathers, which (as is supposed) deformed religion; and led to unworthy thoughts of God, are very much discarded, and grown out of credit, and supposed more free, noble and generous thoughts of the nature of religion, and of the Christian scheme, are entertained; but yet never was an age, wherein religion in general was so much despised and trampled on, and Jesus Christ and God Almighty so blasphemed and treated with open, daring contempt.

The exceeding weakness of mankind, and their insufficiency in themselves for the bringing to pass any thing great and good in the world, with regard to its moral and spiritual state, remarkably appears in many things that have attended and followed the extraordinary religious commotion, that has lately been in many parts of Greatbritain and America. The infirmity of the human nature has been manifested, in a very affecting manner in the various passions that men have been the subjects of, and innumerable ways that they have been moved, as a reed shaken with the wind, on occasion of the changes and incidents, both public and private, of such a state of things. How many errors and extremes are we liable to? How quickly overtopped, blinded, misled, and confounded? And how easily does Satan make fools of men, if confident in their own wisdom and strength, and left to themselves? Many, in the late wonderful season, were ready to admire and trust in men, as if all depended on such and such instruments, at least did ascribe too much to their skill and zeal, because God was pleased to improve them a little while to do extraordinary things: But what great things do the skill and zeal of instruments do now, when the Spirit of God is withdrawn?

As the present state of things may well excite earnest desires after the promised general revival and advancement of true religion, and serve to shew our dependence on God for it, so there are many things in Providence, of late, that tend

to encourage us in prayer for such a mercy. That infidelity, heresy and vice do so prevail, and that corruption and wickedness are risen to such an extreme height, is that which is exceeding deplorable; but yet, I think, considering God's promises to his church, and the ordinary method of his dispensations, hope may justly be gathered from it, that the present state of things will not last long, but that a happy change is nigh. We know that God never will desert the cause of truth and holiness, nor suffer the gates of hell to prevail against his church; and that it has usually been so from the beginning of the world, that the state of the church has appeared most dark, just before some remarkable deliverance and advancement: *Many a time may Israel say, had not the Lord been on our side, then our enemies would have swallowed us up quick.....The waters had overwhelmed us.* The church's extremity has often been God's opportunity for the magnifying his power, mercy and faithfulness towards her. The interest of vital piety has long been in general decaying, and error and wickedness prevailing: It looks as though the disease were now come to a crisis, and that things cannot remain long in such a state, but that a change may be expected in one respect or other. And not only God's manner of dealing with his church in former ages, and many things in the promises and prophecies of his word, but also several things appertaining to present and late aspects of divine Providence, seem to give reason to hope that the change will be such, as to magnify God's free grace and sovereign mercy, and not his revenging justice and wrath. There are certain times, that are days of vengeance, appointed for the more special displays of God's justice and indignation; and God has also his days of mercy, accepted times, chosen seasons, wherein it is his pleasure to shew mercy, and nothing shall hinder it; they are times appointed for the magnifying of the Redeemer and his merits, and the triumphs of his grace, wherein his grace shall triumph over men's unworthiness in its greatest height. And if we consider God's late dealings with our nation and this land, it appears to me that there is much to make us think that this day is such a day: Particularly God's pre-

serving and delivering the nation, when in so great danger of ruin by the late rebellion; and his preserving Newengland, and the other British colonies in America, in so remarkable a manner, from the great armament from France, prepared and sent against us the last year; and the almost miraculous success given to us against our enemies at Cape Breton the year before, disappointing their renewed preparations and fresh attempt against these colonies, this present year, 1747, by delivering up the strength of their fleet into the hands of the English, as they were in their way hither. And also in protecting us from time to time from armies by land that have come against us from Canada, since the beginning of the present war with France. Besides many strange instances of protection of particular forts and settlements, shewing a manifest interposition of the hand of heaven, to the observation of some of our enemies, and even of the savages. And added to these, the late unexpected restoring of the greater part of our many captives in Canada, by those that held them prisoners there. It appears to me that God has gone much out of his usual way, in his exercises of mercy, patience and long suffering in these instances. God's patience was very wonderful of old, towards the ten tribes, and the people of Judah and Jerusalem, and afterwards to the Jews in Christ's and the apostle's times; but it seems to me, all things considered, not equal to his patience and mercy to us. God does not only forbear to destroy us, notwithstanding all our provocations and their aggravations, which it would be endless to recount; but he has in the forementioned instances, wrought great things for us, wherein his hand has been most visible, and his arm made bare; especially those two instances in America, God's succeeding us against Cape Breton, and confounding the armada from France the last year; dispensations of Providence, which, if considered in all their circumstances, were so wonderful, and apparently manifesting an extraordinary divine interposition, that they come perhaps, the nearest to a parallel with God's wonderful works of old, in Moses', Joshua's, and Hezekiah's time, of any that have been in these latter ages of the world. And it is to my present purpose to observe, that

God was pleased to do great things for us in both these instances, in answer to extraordinary prayer. Such remarkable appearances of a spirit of prayer, on any particular public occasion, have not been in the land, at any time within my observation and memory, as on occasion of the affair of Cape Breton. And it is worthy to be noted and remembered, that God sent that great storm on the fleet of our enemies the last year, that finally dispersed, and utterly confounded them, and caused them wholly to give over their designs against us, the very night after our day of public fasting and prayer, for our protection and their confusion.

Thus, although it be a day of great apostacy and provocation, yet it is apparently a day of the wonderful works of God; wonders of power and mercy; which may well lead us to think on those two places of scripture, Psal. cxix. 126. "It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law." And Psal. lxxv. 1. "That thy name is near, thy wonderous works declare." God appears as it were loth to destroy us, or deal with us according to our iniquities, as great and aggravated as they are; and shews that mercy pleases him. As corrupt a time as it is, it is plain by experience, that it is a time wherein God may be found, and stands ready to shew mercy in answer to prayer. He that has done such great things, and has so wonderfully and speedily answered prayer for temporal mercies, will much more give the Holy Spirit if we ask him. He marvellously preserves us, and waits to be gracious to us, as though he chose to make us monuments of his grace, and not his vengeance, and waits only to have us open our mouths wide, that he may fill them.

The late remarkable religious awakenings, that have been in many parts of the christian world, are another thing that may justly encourage us in prayer for the promised glorious and universal outpouring of the Spirit of God. "In or about the year 1732 or 1733, God was pleased to pour out his Spirit on the people of Saltzburg in Germany, who were living under Popish darkness, in a most uncommon manner; so that above twenty thousand of them, merely by reading the Bible, which they made a shift to get in their own language,

were determined to throw off Popery, and embrace the reformed religion; yea, and to become so very zealous for the truth and gospel of Jesus Christ, as to be willing to suffer the loss of all things in the world, and actually to forsake their houses, lands, goods and relations, that they might enjoy the pure preaching of the gospel; with great earnestness, and tears in their eyes, beseeching Protestant ministers to preach to them, in places where they (when banished from their own country) came, in different places." In the years 1734 and 1735, there appeared a very great and general awakening, in the county of Hampshire, in the province of the Massachusetts Bay in Newengland, and also in many parts of Connecticut. Since this, there has been a far more extensive awakening of many thousands in England, Wales and Scotland, and almost all the British provinces in North America. There has also been something remarkable of the same kind, in some places in the United Netherlands: And about two years ago, a very great awakening and reformation of many of the Indians, in the Jerseys, and Pennsylvania, even among such as never embraced Christianity before: And within these two years, a great awakening in Virginia and Maryland. Notwithstanding the great diversity of opinions about the issue of some of these awakenings, yet I know of none that have denied that there have been great awakenings of late, in these times and places, and that multitudes have been brought to more than common concern for their salvation, and for a time were made more than ordinarily afraid of sin, and brought to reform their former vicious courses, and take much pains for their salvation. If I should be of the opinion of those that think these awakenings and strivings of God's Spirit have been generally not well improved, and so, as to most, have not issued well, but have ended in enthusiasm and delusion, yet, that the Spirit of God has been of late so wonderfully awakening and striving with such multitudes, in so many different parts of the world, and even to this day, in one place or other, continues to awaken men, is what I should take great encouragement from, that God was about to do something more glorious, and would, before he finishes, bring things to a greater

ripeness, and not finally suffer this work of his to be frustrated and rendered abortive by Satan's crafty management ; and that these unusual commotions are the forerunners of something exceeding glorious approaching ; as the wind, earthquake and fire, at Mount Sinai, were forerunners of that voice, wherein God was, in a more eminent manner ; although they also were caused by a divine power, as it is represented that these things were caused by the Lord passing by, 1 Kings xix. 11, 12.

8. How condecent, how beautiful, and of good tendency would it be, for multitudes of Christians, in various parts of the world, by explicit agreement, to unite in such prayer as is proposed to us.

Union is one of the most amiable things, that pertains to human society ; yea, it is one of the most beautiful and happy things on earth, which indeed makes earth most like heaven. God has made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth ; hereby teaching us this moral lesson, that it becomes mankind all to be united as one family. And this is agreeable to the nature that God has given men, disposing them to society ; and the circumstances God has placed them in, so many ways obliging and necessitating them to it. A civil union, or an harmonious agreement among men in the management of their secular concerns, is amiable ; but much more a pious union and sweet agreement in the great business for which man was created, and had powers given him beyond the brutes ; even the business of religion ; the life and soul of which is love. Union is spoken of in scripture as the peculiar beauty of the church of Christ, Cant. vi. 9. " My dove, my undefiled is but one, she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her ; the daughters saw her and blessed her, yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her." Psal. cxxii. 3. " Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together." Eph. iv. 3.....6. " Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit ; even as ye are called in one hope of your calling ; one Lord,

one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Ver. 16. "The whole body fitly framed together and compacted, by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying itself in love."

As it is the glory of the church of Christ, that she in all her members, however dispersed, is thus one holy society, one city, one family, one body; so it is very desirable, that this union should be manifested, and become visible; and so, that her distant members should act as one, in those things that concern the common interest of the whole body, and in those duties and exercises wherein they have to do with their common Lord and head, as seeking of him the common prosperity. It becomes all the members of a particular family, who are so strictly united, and have in so many respects one common interest, to unite in prayer to God for the things they need: It becomes a nation, in days of prayer, appointed by national authority, at certain seasons, visibly to unite in prayer for those public mercies that concern the interest of the whole nation: So it becomes the church of Christ, which is one holy nation, a peculiar people, one heavenly family, more strictly united, in many respects, and having infinitely greater interests that are common to the whole, than any other society; I say, it especially becomes this society, visibly to unite, and expressly to agree together in prayer to God for the common prosperity; and above all, that common prosperity and advancement that is so unspeakably great and glorious, which God hath so abundantly promised to fulfil in the latter days.

It is becoming of Christians, with whose character a narrow selfish spirit, above all others, disagrees, to be much in prayer for that public mercy, wherein consists the welfare and happiness of the whole body of Christ, of which they are members, and the greatest good of mankind. And union or agreement in prayer is especially becoming, when Christians pray for that mercy, which above all other things concerns

them unitedly, and tends to the relief, prosperity and glory of the whole body, as well as of each individual member.

Such an union in prayer for the general outpouring of the Spirit of God, would not only be beautiful, but profitable too. It would tend very much to promote union and charity between distant members of the church of Christ, and a public spirit, and love to the church of God, and concern for the interest of Zion; as well as be an amiable exercise and manifestation of such a spirit. Union in religious duties, especially in the duty of prayer, in praying one with and for another, and jointly for their common welfare, above almost all other things, tends to promote mutual affection and endearment. And if ministers and people should by particular agreement and joint resolution, set themselves, in a solemn and extraordinary manner, from time to time, to pray for the revival of religion in the world, it would naturally tend more to awaken in them a concern about things of this nature, and more of a desire after such a mercy; it would engage them to more attention to such an affair, make them more inquisitive about it, more ready to use endeavors to promote that which they, with so many others, spend so much time in praying for, and more ready to rejoice and praise God when they see or hear of any thing of that nature or tendency: And in a particular manner, would it naturally tend to engage ministers (the business of whose lives it is, to seek the welfare of the church of Christ, and the advancement of his kingdom) to greater diligence and earnestness in their work: And it would have a tendency to the spiritual profit and advantage of each particular person. For persons to be thus engaged in extraordinarily praying for the reviving and flourishing of religion in the world, will naturally lead each one to reflect on himself, and consider how religion flourishes in his own heart, and how far his example contributes to the thing that he is praying for.

9. There is great and particular encouragement given in the word of God, to express union and agreement in prayer. Daniel, when he had a great thing to request of God, viz.

That God by his Holy Spirit would miraculously reveal to him a great secret, which none of the wise men, astrologers, magicians or soothsayers of Babylon could find out, he goes to Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, his companions, and they agree together, that they will unitedly desire mercies of the God of heaven, concerning this secret; and their joint request was soon granted; and God put great honor upon them, above all the wise men of Babylon, to the filling their mouths with praise, and to the admiration and astonishment of Nebuchadnezzar; insomuch that that great and haughty monarch, as we are told, fell upon his face and worshipped Daniel, and owned that *his God was of a truth, a God of Gods*, and greatly promoted Daniel and his praying companions in the province of Babylon. Esther, when she had a yet more important request to make, for the saving of the church of God, and whole nation of the Jews, dispersed through the empire of Persia, when on the brink of ruin, sends to all the Jews in the city Shushan to pray and fast with her and her maidens; and their united prayers prevail; so that the event was wonderful: Instead of the intended destruction of the Jews, the Jews enemies are destroyed every where, and they are defended, honored and promoted, and their sorrow and distress is turned into great gladness, feasting, triumph and mutual joyful congratulations.

The encouragement to explicit agreement in prayer is great from such instances as these; but it is yet greater from those wonderful words of our blessed Redeemer, Mat. xviii. 19. "I say unto you, that if any two of you shall agree on earth, touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Christ is pleased to give this great encouragement to the union of his followers in this excellent and holy exercise of seeking and serving God; an holy union and communion of his people being that which he greatly desires and delights in, that which he came into the world to bring to pass, that which he especially prayed for with his dying breath, John xvii. that which he died for, and which was one chief end of the whole affair of our redemption by him; Eph. i. "In whom we

have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him."

PART III.

OBJECTIONS *Answered.*

I COME now, as was proposed, in the third place, to answer objections, that some may be ready to make against the thing that has been proposed to us.

OBJECT. I. Some may be ready to say: That for Christians, in such a manner to set apart certain seasons, every week, and every quarter, to be religiously observed and kept for the purposes proposed, from year to year, would be in effect to establish certain periodical times of human invention and appointment, to be kept holy to God; and so to do the very thing, that has ever been objected against, by a very great part of the most eminent Christians and Divines among Protestants, as what men have no right to do; it being for them to add to God's institutions, and introduce their own inventions and establishments into the stated worship of God, and lay unwarrantable bonds on men's consciences, and do what naturally tends to superstition.

ANSWER. To this I would say: There can be no justice in such an objection against this proposal, as made to us in the forementioned memorial. And indeed that caution and prudence appears in the projection itself, and in the manner in which it is proposed to us, that there is not so much as any color for the objection. The proposal is such, and so well guarded, that there seems to be no room for the weakest

Christian that well observes it, so to mistake it, as to understand those things to be implied in it, that have indeed been objected against, by many eminent Christians and Divines among Protestants, as entangling men's consciences, and adding to divine institutions, &c. Here is no pretence of establishing any thing by authority; no appearance of any claim of power in the proposers, or right to any regard to be paid to their determinations or proposals, by virtue of any deference due to them, in any respect, any more than to every individual person of those that they apply themselves to. So far from that, that they expressly mention that which they have thought of, as what they would propose to the thoughts of others, for their amendments and improvements, declaring that they chose rather to receive and spread the directions and proposals of others, than to be the first authors of any. No times, not sanctified by God's own institution, are proposed to be observed more than others, under any notion of such times being, in any respect, more holy, or more honorable, or worthy of any preference, or distinguishing regard; either as being sanctified, or made honorable, by authority, or by any great events of divine Providence, or any relation to any holy persons or things; but only as circumstantially convenient, helpful to memory, especially free from worldly business, near to the times of the administration of public ordinances, &c. None attempts to lay any bonds on others, with respect to this matter; or to desire that they should lay any bonds on themselves; or look on themselves as under any obligations either by power or promise; or so much as come into any absolute determination in their own minds, to set apart any stated days from secular affairs; or even to fix on any part of such days, without liberty to other circumstances, as shall be found expedient; and also liberty left to a future alteration of judgment, as to expediency, on further trial and consideration. All that is proposed is, that such as fall in with what is proposed in their judgments and inclinations, while they do so, should strengthen, assist and encourage their brethren that are of the same mind, by visibly consenting and joining with them in the affair. Is here any thing

like making laws in matters of conscience and religion, or adding men's institutions to God's; or any shew of imposition, or superstitious esteeming and preferring one day above another, or any possible ground of entanglement of any one's conscience?

For men to go about by law to establish and limit circumstances of worship, not established or limited by any law of God, such as precise time, place and order, may be in many respects of dangerous tendency. But surely it cannot be unlawful or improper, for Christians to come into some agreement, with regard to these circumstances: For it is impossible to carry on any social worship without it. There is no institution of scripture requiring any people to meet together to worship God in such a spot of ground, or at such an hour of the day; but yet these must be determined by agreement; or else there will be no social worship, in any place, or any hour. So we are not determined by institution, what the precise order of the different parts of worship shall be; what shall precede, and what shall follow; whether praying or singing shall be first, and what shall be next, and what shall conclude: But yet some order must be agreed on, by the congregation that unite in worship; otherwise they cannot jointly carry on divine worship, in any way or method at all. If a congregation of Christians do agree to begin their public worship with prayer, and next to sing, and then to attend on the preaching of the word, and to conclude with prayer; and do by consent carry on their worship in this order from year to year; though this order is not appointed in scripture; none will call this superstition. And if a great number of congregations, through a whole land, or more lands than one, do by common consent, keep the same method of public worship; none will pretend to find fault with it. But yet for any to go about to bind all to such a method, would be usurpation and imposition. And if such a precise order should be regarded as sacred, as though no other could be acceptable to God, this would be superstition. If a particular number of Christians shall agree, that besides the stated public worship of the sabbath, they will, when their circumstances allow,

meet together, to carry on some religious exercises, on a sabbath day night, for their mutual edification; or if several societies agree to meet together in different places at that time; this is no superstition; though there be no institution for it. If people in different congregations, voluntarily agree to take turns to meet together in the house of God, to worship him and hear a public lecture, once a month, or once in six weeks; it is not unlawful; though there be no institution for it: But yet to do this as a thing sacred, indispensable, and binding on men's consciences, would be superstition. If Christians of several neighboring congregations, instead of a lecture, agree on some special occasion to keep a circular fast, each congregation taking its turn in a certain time and order, fixed on by consent; or if instead of keeping fast by turns, on different days, one on one week, and one on another, they should all agree to keep a fast on the same day, and to do this either once or frequently, according as they shall judge their own circumstances, or the dispensations of divine Providence, or the importance of the mercy they seek, do require; neither is there any more superstition in this than the other.

Object. II. Some may be ready to say, There seems to be something whimsical in its being insisted on that God's people in different places should put up their prayers for this mercy at the same time; as though their prayers would be more forcible on that account; and as if God would not be so likely to hear prayers offered up by many, though they happened not to pray at the same time, as he would if he heard them all at the same moment.

Ans. To this I would say, if such an objection be made, it must be through misunderstanding. It is not signified or implied in any thing said in the proposal, or in any arguments made use of to enforce it that I have seen, that the prayers of a great number in different places will be more forcible, merely because of that circumstance of their being put up at the same time. It is indeed supposed, that it will be very expedient, that certain times for united prayer should be agreed on: Which it may be, without supposing the thing supposed in the objection, on the following accounts.

1. This seems to be a proper expedient for the promoting and maintaining an union among Christians of distant places, in *extraordinary prayer* for such a mercy. It appears, from what was before observed, that there ought to be extraordinary prayers among Christians for this mercy; and that it is fit, that God's people should agree and unite in it. Though there be no reason to suppose that prayers will be more prevalent, merely from that circumstance, that different persons pray exactly at the *same time*; yet there will be more reason to hope that prayers for such mercy will be prevalent, when God's people are very much in prayer for it, and when many of them are united in it. And therefore if agreeing on certain times for united and extraordinary prayer, be a likely means to promote an union of many in extraordinary prayer, then there is more reason to hope, that there will be prevalent prayer for such a mercy, for certain times for extraordinary prayer being agreed on. But that agreeing on certain times for united, extraordinary prayer, is a likely and proper means to promote and maintain such prayer, I think will be easily evident to any one that considers the matter. If there should be only a loose agreement or consent to it as a duty, or a thing fit and proper, that Christians should be much in prayer for the revival of religion, and much more in it than they used to be, without agreeing on particular times, how liable would such a lax agreement be to be soon forgotten, and that extraordinary prayerfulness, which is fixed to no certain times, to be totally neglected? To be sure, distant parts of the church of Christ could have no confidence in one another, that this would not be the case. If these ministers in Scotland, instead of the proposal they have made, or any other ministers or Christians in any part of the Christian world, had sent abroad only a general proposal, that God's people should, for time to come, be much more in prayer for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, than had been common among Christians heretofore; and they should hear their proposal was generally allowed to be good; and that ministers and people, in one place and another, that had occasion to speak their minds upon it, owned that it was a very proper thing, that Christians

should pray more for this mercy than they generally used to do; could they from this only, have in any measure the like grounds of dependence, that God's people in various parts of the Christian world, would indeed henceforward act unitedly, in maintaining extraordinary prayer for this mercy, as if they should not only hear that the duty in general was approved of, but also that particular times were actually fixed on for the purpose, and an agreement and joint resolution was come into, that they would, unless extraordinarily hindered, set apart such particular seasons to be spent in this duty, from time to time, maintaining this practice for a certain number of years?

2. For God's people in distant places to agree on certain times for extraordinary prayer, wherein they will unitedly put up their requests to God, is a means fit and proper to be used, in order to the *visibility* of their union in such prayer. Union among God's people in prayer is truly beautiful, as has been before observed and shewn; it is beautiful in the eyes of Christ, and it is justly beautiful and amiable in the eyes of Christians. And if so, then it must needs be desirable to Christians that such union should be visible. If it would be a lovely sight in the eyes of the church of Christ, and much to their comfort, to behold various and different parts of the church united in extraordinary prayer for the general outpouring of the Spirit, then it must be desirable to them that such an union should be visible, that they may behold it; for if it be not visible, it cannot be beheld. But agreement and union in a multitude in their worship becomes visible, by an agreement in some external visible circumstances. Worship itself becomes visible worship, by something external and visible belonging to the worship, and no other way: Therefore union and agreement of many in worship becomes visible no other way, but by union and agreement in the external and visible acts and circumstances of the worship. Such union and agreement becomes visible, particularly by an agreement in those two visible circumstances, *time* and *place*. When a number of Christians live near together, and their number and situation is convenient, and they have a desire visibly to unite in any acts of worship, they are wont to

make their union and agreement visible by an union in both these circumstances. But when a much greater number of Christians, dwelling in distant places, so that they cannot unite by worshipping in the same place, and yet desire a visible union in some extraordinary worship; they are wont to make their union and agreement visible, by agreeing only in the former of those circumstances, viz. that of time: As is common in the appointment of public fasts and thanksgivings; the same day is appointed, for the performance of that extraordinary worship, by all those Christians, in different places, that it is intended should be united therein, as a visible note of their union. This the common light and sense of God's people leads Christians to, in all countries. And the wisdom of God seems to dictate the same thing, in appointing that his people, through the world, in all ages, in their stated and ordinary public worship, every week, should manifest this union and communion one with another, in their worship, as one holy society, and great congregation of worshippers, and servants of God; by offering up their worship on the same day; for the greater glory of their common Lord, and the greater edification and comfort of the whole body.

If any yet find fault with the proposal of certain times to be agreed on by God's people in different places, in the manner set forth in the memorial, I would ask whether they object against any such thing, as a visible agreement of God's people, in different parts of the world, in extraordinary prayer, for the coming of Christ's kingdom? Whether such a thing being visible would not be much for the public honor of God's name? And whether it would not tend to Christians' assistance, quickening and encouragement in the duty united in, by mutual example, and also to their mutual comfort, by a manifestation of that union which is amiable to Christ and Christians, and to promote a Christian union among professing Christians in general? And whether we have not reason to think, from the word of God, that before that great revival of religion foretold, is accomplished, there will be a visible union of the people of God, in various parts of the world, in extraordinary prayer, for this mercy? If these things are

allowed; I would then ask further, whether any method can be thought of or devised, whereby an express agreement, and visible union of God's people, in different parts of the world, can be come into, and maintained, but this, or some other equivalent to it? If there be any express agreement about any extraordinary prayer at all, it must first be proposed by some, and others must fall in, in the manner as is represented in my text. And if extraordinary prayer be agreed on and maintained by many in different places, visibly one with another, then it must be agreed in some respect, and with regard to some circumstances, what extraordinary prayer shall be kept up; and it must be seen and heard of, from one to another, what extraordinary prayer is kept up. But how shall this be, when no times are agreed upon, and it is never known nor heard, by those in different parts, nor is in any respect visible to them, when or how often, those in one town or country, and another, do attend this extraordinary prayer? And the consequence must necessarily be, that it can never be known how far, or in what respect others join with them in extraordinary prayer, or whether they do it at all; and not so much as one circumstance of extraordinary prayer will be visible; and indeed nothing will be visible about it. So that I think that any body that well considers the matter, will see that he that determines to oppose such a method as is proposed to us in the memorial, and all others equivalent to it, is in effect determined to oppose there ever being any such thing at all, as an agreed and visibly united, extraordinary prayer, in the church of God, for a general outpouring of the Spirit.

3. Though it would not be reasonable to suppose, that merely such a circumstance of prayer, as many people's praying at the same time will directly have any influence of prevalence with *God*, to cause him to be the more ready to hear prayer; yet such a circumstance may reasonably be supposed to have influence on the minds of *men*; as the consideration of it may tend to encourage and assist those in praying, that are united in prayer. Will any deny, that it has any reasonable tendency to encourage, animate, or in any respect to help the mind of a Christian in serving God in any

duty of religion, to join with a Christian congregation, and to see an assembly of his dear brethren around him, at the same time engaged with him in the same duty? And supposing one in this assembly of saints is blind, and sees no one there; but has by other means ground of satisfaction that there is present at that time a multitude of God's people, that are united with him in the same service; will any deny, that his supposing this and being satisfied of it, can have any reasonable influence upon his mind, to excite and encourage him, or in any respect to assist him, in his worship? The encouragement or help that one that joins with an assembly in worshipping God, has in his worship, by others being united with him, is not merely by any thing that he immediately perceives by sight, or any other of the external senses (for union in worship is not a thing objected to the external senses) but by the notice or knowledge the mind has of that union, or the satisfaction the understanding has that others, at that time, have their minds engaged with him in the same service: Which may be, when those unitedly engaged, are at a distance one from another, as well as when they are present. If one be present in a worshipping assembly, and is not blind, and sees others present, and sees their external behavior; their union and engagedness with him in worship, is what he does not see: And what he sees encourages and assists him in his worship, only as he takes it as an evidence of that union and concurrence in his worship, that is out of his sight. And persons may have evidence of this, concerning persons that are absent, that may give him as much satisfaction of their union with him, as if they were present. And therefore the consideration of others being at the same time engaged with him in worship, that are absent, may as reasonably animate and encourage him in his worship, as if they were present.

There is no wisdom in finding fault with human nature, as God has made it. Things that exist now, at this present time, are in themselves no more weighty or important, than like things, and of equal reality, that existed in time past, or are to exist in time to come: Yet it is evident that the consideration of things being present (at least in most cases) does

especially affect human nature. As for instance, if a man could be certainly informed, that his dear child at a distance, was now under some extreme suffering; or that an absent most dear friend, was at this time thinking of him, and in the exercise of great affection towards him, or in the performance of some great deed of friendship; or if a pious parent should know that now his child was in the act of some enormous wickedness; or that, on the contrary, he was now in some eminent exercise of grace, and in the performance of an extraordinary deed of virtue and piety; would not those things be more affecting to the human nature, for being considered as things that are in existence, at the present time, than if considered as at some distance of time, either past or future? Hundreds of other instances might be mentioned, wherein it is no less plain, that the consideration of the present existence of things, gives them advantage to affect the minds of men. Yea, it is undoubtedly so with things in general, that take any hold at all of our affections, and towards which we are not indifferent. And if the mind of a particular child of God is disposed to be affected by the consideration of the religion of other saints, and with their union and concurrence with him in any particular duty, or act of religion, I can see no reason why the human mind should not be more moved by the object of its affection, when considered as present, as well in this case, as in any other case: Yea, I think we may on good grounds determine there is none.

Nor may we look upon it as an instance of the peculiar weakness of the human nature, that men are more affected with things that are considered as present, than those that are distant: But it seems to be a thing common to finite minds, and so to all created intelligent beings. Thus, the angels in heaven have peculiar joy, on occasion of the conversion of a sinner, when recent, beyond what they have in that which has been long past. If any, therefore, shall call it silly and whimsical in any, to value and regard such a circumstance, in things of religion, as their existing at the present time, so as to be the more affected with them for that; they

must call the host of angels in heaven a parcel of silly and whimsical beings.

I remember, the Spectator, (whom none will call a whimsical author) somewhere speaking of different ways of dear friends mutually expressing their affection, and maintaining a kind of intercourse, in absence one from another, mentions such an instance as this, with much approbation, viz. That two friends, that were greatly endeared one to another, when about to part, and to be for a considerable time necessarily absent, that they might have the comfort of the enjoyment of daily mutual expressions of friendship, in their absence; agreed that they would, every day, precisely at such an hour, retire from all company and business, to pray one for another. Which agreement they so valued, and so strictly observed, that when the hour came, scarce any thing would hinder them. And rather than miss the opportunity, they would suddenly break off conversation, and abruptly leave company they were engaged with. If this be a desirable way of intercourse of particular friends, is it not a desirable and amiable way of maintaining intercourse and fellowship between brethren in Christ Jesus, and the various members of the holy family of God, in different parts of the world, to come into an agreement, that they will set apart certain times, which they will spend with one accord, in extraordinary prayer to their heavenly father, for the advancement of the kingdom and glory of their common dear Lord and Saviour, and for each other's prosperity and happiness, and the greatest good of all their fellow creatures through the world?

Object. III. Some perhaps may object, that it looks too much like Pharisaism, when persons engage in any such extraordinary religious exercises, beyond what is appointed by express institution, for them thus designedly to make it manifest abroad in the world, and so openly to distinguish themselves from others.

Ans. 1. All open engaging in extraordinary exercises of religion, not expressly enjoined by institution, is not Phansaism, nor has ever been so reputed in the Christian church. As when a particular church or congregation of Christians

agree together to keep a day of fasting and prayer, on some special occasion ; or when public days of fasting and thanksgiving are kept throughout a Christian province or country : And though it be ordinarily the manner of the civil magistrate to lead in the setting apart such days ; yet that alters not the case : If it be Pharisaism in the society openly to agree in such extraordinary exercises of religion, it is not less Pharisaism, for the heads of the society leading in the affair. And if that were now the case with the Christian church, that once was, for about three hundred years together, that the civil magistrate was not of the society of Christians, nor concerned himself in their affairs ; yet this would not render it the less suitable for Christians, on proper occasions, jointly and visibly, one to another, to engage in such extraordinary exercises of religion, and to keep days of fasting and thanksgiving by agreement.

Ans. 2. As to the latter part of the objection, there can be no room for it in this case. It cannot be objected against what is proposed in the memorial, that if persons should comply with it, it would look like affecting singularity, and open distinction from others of God's professing people, in extraordinary religion, such as was in the Pharisees of old : Because it is evident, the very design of the memorial, is not to promote singularity and distinction, but as much as possible to avoid and prevent it. The end of the memorial is not to confine and limit the thing proposed, that it may be practised only by a few, in distinction from the generality ; but on the contrary to extend it, and make it as general among professing Christians as possible. Some had complied with the extraordinary duty proposed, and therein had been distinguished from others, for two years, before the memorial was published ; and they were more distinguished than they desired ; and therefore send abroad this memorial, that the practice might be more spread, and become more general, that they might be less distinguished. What they evidently seek, is to bring to pass as general a compliance as possible of Christians of all denominations, *intreating that the desire of concurrence and assistance, contained in the memorial, may by no means*

be understood, as restricting to any particular denomination or party, or those who are of such or such opinions about any former instances of remarkable religious concern; but to be extended to all, who shall vouchsafe any attention to the proposal, and have at heart the interest of vital Christianity, and the power of godliness; and who, however differing about other things, are convinced of the importance of fervent prayer, to promote that common interest, and of scripture persuasives, to promote such prayer.

OBJECT. IV. Another objection, that is very likely to arise in the minds of many against such extraordinary prayer as is proposed for the speedy coming of Christ's kingdom, is that we have no reason to expect it, until there first come a time of most extreme calamity to the church of God, and prevalence of her Antichristian enemies against her; even that which is represented, Rev. xi. by the slaying of the witnesses; but have reason to determine the contrary.

ANS. It is an opinion that seems pretty much to have obtained, that before the fulfilment of the promises relating to the church's latter day glory, there must come a most terrible time, a time of extreme suffering, and dreadful persecution of the church of Christ; wherein Satan and Antichrist are to obtain their greatest victory over her, and she is to be brought lower than ever by her enemies. Which opinion has chiefly risen from the manner of interpreting and applying the forementioned prophecy of the slaying of the witnesses. This opinion, with such persons as retain it, must needs be a great restraint and hinderance, with regard to such an affair as is proposed to us in the memorial. If persons expect no other, than that the more the glorious times of Christ's kingdom are hastened, the sooner will come this dreadful time, wherein the generality of God's people must suffer so extremely, and the church of Christ be almost extinguished, and blotted out from under heaven; how can it be otherwise, than a great damp to their hope, courage and activity, in praying for, and reaching after the speedy introduction of those glorious promised times? As long as this opinion is retained, it will undoubtedly ever have this unhappy influence on the

minds of those that wish well to Zion, and favor her stones and dust. It will tend to damp, deaden and keep down, life, hope and joyful expectation in prayer; and even in great measure, to prevent all earnest, animated and encouraged prayer, in God's people, for this mercy, at any time before it is actually fulfilled. For they that proceed on this hypothesis in their prayers, must, at the same time that they pray for this glorious day, naturally conclude within themselves, that they shall never live to see on the earth any dawning of it, but only to see the dismal time that shall precede it, in which the far greater part of God's people, that shall live until then, shall die under the extreme cruelties of their persecutors. And the more they expect that God will answer their prayers, by speedily bringing on the promised glorious day, the more must they withal expect themselves, to have a share in those dreadful things, that nature shrinks at the thoughts of, and also expect to see things that a renewed nature shrinks at and dreads; even the prevailing of God's enemies, and the almost total extinguishing the true religion in the world. And on this hypothesis, these discouragements are like to attend the prayers of God's people, until that dismal time be actually come: And when that is come, those that had been prophesying and praying in sackcloth, shall generally be slain: And after that time is over, then the glorious day shall immediately commence. So that this notion tends to discourage and hinder all earnest prayer in the church of God for that glorious coming of Christ's kingdom, until it be actually come; and that is to hinder its ever being at all.

It being so, this opinion being of such hurtful tendency, certainly it is a thousand pities it should prevail and be retained, if truly there be no good ground for it.

Therefore in answer to this objection, I would, with all humility and modesty, examine the foundation of that opinion, of such a dreadful time of victory of Antichrist over the church, yet to be expected: And particularly shall endeavor to shew that the slaying of the witnesses, foretold Rev. xi. 7... 10, is not an event that remains yet to be fulfilled. To this end, I would propose the following things to consideration.

1. The time wherein the *witnesses lie dead in the streets of the great city*, doubtless signifies the time wherein the true church of Christ is lowest of all, most of all prevailed against by Antichrist, and nearest to an utter extinction; the time wherein there is left the least visibility of the church of Christ yet subsisting in the world, least remains of any thing appertaining to true religion, whence a revival of it can be expected, and wherein all means of it are most abolished, and the state of the church is in all respects furthest from any thing whence any hopes of its ever flourishing again might arise. For before this, the witnesses prophecy in sackcloth; but now they are dead: Before this, they were kept low indeed, yet there was life, and power to bring plagues on their enemies, and so much of true religion left, as to be a continual eye sore and torment to them; but now their enemies rejoice and feast, and have a general public triumph, as having obtained a full victory over them, and having entirely extirpated them, and being completely delivered from them, and all that might give them any fear of being ever troubled with them any more..... This time, wherever it be fixed, doubtless is the time, not only, wherein fewest professors of true religion are left in the world; but a time wherein the truth shall be farthest out of sight, and out of reach, and most forgotten; wherein there are left fewest beams of light or traces of truth, fewest means of information, and opportunities of coming to the knowledge of the truth; and so a time of the most barbarous ignorance, most destitute of all history, reliques, monuments and memory of things appertaining to true religion, or things, the knowledge of which hath any tendency to bring truth again to light; and most destitute of learning, study and inquiry.

Now, if we consider the present state of mankind, is it credible, that a time will yet come in the world, that in these respects exceeds all times that were before the reformation? And that such a time will come before the fall of Antichrist, unless we set that at a much greater distance, than the farthest that any have yet supposed? It is next to impossible, that such a change should be brought about in so short a time: It cannot be without a miracle. In order to it, not on-

ly must the Popish nations so prevail, as utterly to extirpate the Protestant religion through the earth; but must do many other things, far more impossible for them to effect, in order to cover the world with so gross and confirmed a darkness, and to bury all light and truth in so deep an oblivion, and so far out of all means and hopes of a revival. And not only must av ast change be made in the Protestant world, but the Popish nations must be strangely metamorphosed; and they themselves must be terribly persecuted by some other power, in order to bring them to such a change: Nor would persecution without extirpation be sufficient for it. If there should be another universal deluge, it might be sufficient to bring things in the world to such a pass; provided a few ignorant barbarous persons only were preserved in an ark: And it would require some catastrophe, not much short of this, to effect it.

2. In the reformation, that was in the days of Luther, Calvin and others, their contemporaries, the threatened destruction of Antichrist, that dreadful enemy, that had long oppressed and worn out the saints, was begun; nor was it a small beginning, but Antichrist hath fallen, at least, half way to the ground, from that height of power and grandeur, that he was in before. Then began the vials of God's wrath to be *poured out on the throne of the beast*, to the great shaking of its foundations, and diminution of its extent; so that the Pope lost near half of his former dominions: And as to degree of authority and influence over what is left, he is not now possessed of what he had before. God now at length, in answer to the long continued cries of his people, awaked as one out of sleep, and began to deliver his church from her exceeding low state, that she had continued in for many ages, under the great oppression of this grand enemy, and to restore her from her exile and bondage in the spiritual Babylon and Egypt.... And it is not agreeable to the analogy of God's dispensations, that after this, God should desert his people, and hide himself from them, even more than before, and leave them more than ever in the hands of their enemy, and all this advantage of the church against Antichrist should be entirely given up and

lost, and the power and tyranny of Antichrist be more confirmed, and the church brought more under, and more entirely subdued than ever before, and further from all help and means to recover. This is not God's way of dealing with his people, or with their enemies: His work of salvation is perfect: When he has begun such a work he will carry it on: When he once causes the day of deliverance to dawn to his people, after such a long night of dismal darkness, he will not extinguish the light, and cause them to return again to midnight darkness: When he has begun to enkindle the blessed fire, he will not quench the smoking flax, until he hath brought forth judgment unto victory. When once the church, after her long labor and sore travail, has brought forth her man child, and wrought some deliverance, her enemies shall never be able to destroy this child, though an infant; but it shall ascend up to heaven, and be set on high out of their reach.

The destruction that God often foretold and threatened to ancient Babylon (which is often referred to in the Revelation, as a great type of the Antichristian church) was gradually accomplished, and fulfilled by various steps, at a great distance of time one from another: It was begun in the conquest of Cyrus, and was further accomplished by Darius, about eighteen years after, by a yet greater destruction, wherein it was brought much nearer to utter desolation; but it was about two hundred and twentythree years after this, before the ruin of it was perfected, and the prophecies against it fully accomplished, in its being made an utter and perpetual desolation, without any human inhabitant, becoming the dwelling place for owls, dragons and other doleful creatures. But yet when God had once begun to destroy her, he went on until he finished, and never suffered her any more to recover and establish her former empire. So the restitution of the Jewish church, after the Babylonish captivity, was gradual, by various steps; there were several times of return of the Jews from captivity, and several distinct decrees of the Persian emperors, for the restoring and rebuilding Jerusalem, and reestablishing the Jewish church and state; and it was done in turbulent times; there were great interruptions and checks, and violent

oppositions, and times wherein the enemy did much prevail: But yet, when God had once begun the work, he also made an end; he never suffered the enemies of the Jews to bring Jerusalem to such a state of desolation as it had been in before, until the promised restoration was complete. Again, the deliverance of God's church from the oppression of Antiochus Epiphanes, (another known type of Antichrist) was gradual; they were first holpen with a little help, by the Maccabees; and afterwards the promised deliverance was completed, in the recovery of Jerusalem, the restoration of the temple, the miserable end of Antiochus, and the consequent more full deliverance of the whole land. But after God once began to appear for the help of his church in that instance, after it seemed dead and past all hope, he never suffered Antiochus to prevail against his people, to that degree, again; though the utmost strength of this great monarch was used, from time to time, in order to it, and his vast empire was engaged against an handful that opposed them: God never forsook the work of his own hand; when he had begun to deliver his people, he also made an end. And so Haman, that proud and inveterate enemy of the Jews, that thought to extirpate the whole nation, who also was probably another type of Antichrist, when he began to fall before Esther and Mordecai, never stayed, until his ruin, and the church's deliverance were complete. Haman's wife speaks of it, as an argument of his approaching inevitable full destruction, that he had begun to fall, Esth. vi. 15.

3. If it should be so that Antichristian tyranny and darkness should hereafter so prevail against the Protestant church, and the true religion, and every thing appertaining to it, as to bring things to the pass forementioned, this would hardly so properly answer the prophecy of slaying the two witnesses; for doubtless, one reason why they are called two witnesses, is that the number of the remaining witnessess for the truth, though sufficient, was yet very small. Which was remarkably the case, in the dark times of Popery: But since the reformation, the number of those appearing on the side of true religion, has been far from being so small. The visible

church of Christ has been vastly large, in comparison of what it was before: The number of Protestants has sometimes been thought nearly equal to that of the Papists; and doubtless the number of true saints has been far greater than before.

4. It seems to be signified in prophecy, that after the reformation Antichrist should never prevail against the church of Christ any more, as he had done before. I cannot but think, that whoever reads and well considers what the learned Mr. Lowman has written on the five first vials, Rev. xvi. in his late exposition on the Revelation, must think it to be very manifest, that what is said ver. 10, of the pouring out of the fifth vial *on the throne of the beast*, (for so it is in the original) is a prophecy of the reformation. Then the vial of God's wrath was poured out on the throne of the beast, i. e. according to the language of scripture, on his authority and dominion, greatly to weaken and diminish it, both in extent and degree. But when this is represented in the prophecy, then it is added, *and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain.* If we consider what is commonly intended by such like phrases in the scripture, I think we shall be naturally, and as it were necessarily led to understand those words thus: Their policy, by which heretofore they have prevailed, shall now fail them; their authority shall be weakened, and their dominion greatly diminished, and all their craft and subtilty shall not avail them to maintain and support the throne of the beast, or ever again to extend his authority so far as it had been before extended, and to recover what it lost; but all their crafty devices to this end shall be attended with vexatious, tormenting disappointment; they that have the management of the affairs of the beast's kingdom, shall henceforward grope as in the dark, and stumble, and be confounded in their purposes, plots and enterprizes; formerly their policy was greatly successful, was as a light to guide them to their ends, but now their kingdom shall be full of darkness, and their wisdom shall fail them in all their devices to subdue, and again to bring under the church of God.

The scripture takes notice of the great policy and subtilty of the powers that support this kingdom, Dan. vii. 8. "And

behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man." So it is said of Antiochus Epiphanes, that great type of Antichrist, Dan viii. 23. "A king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up." Verse 25. "And through his policy also, shall he cause craft to prosper in his hand." This understanding and policy is the light of this kingdom, as true wisdom is the light of the spiritual Jerusalem. And therefore when this light fails, then may the kingdom of this spiritual Egypt be said to be full of darkness. God henceforward will defend his people from these mystical Egyptians, as he defended Israel of old from Pharaoh and his host, when pursuing after them, by placing a cloud and darkness in their way, and so not suffering them to come nigh. So he will protect his church from the men of that city that is spiritually called Sodom, as Lot's house, wherein were the angels, was defended from the men of Sodom, by their being smitten with darkness or blindness, so that they wearied themselves to find the door; and as God defended the city in which was Elisha the prophet and witness of the Lord, from the Syrians, when they compassed it about with horses and chariots and a great host to apprehend him, by smiting them with blindness. The scripture teaches us, that God is wont in this way to defend his church and people from their crafty and powerful enemies; Job. v. 11, &c. "To set up on high those that be low, that those which mourn may be exalted to safety: He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprize: He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong: They meet with darkness in the day time, and grope in the noon day as in the night; but he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty." Psal. xxxv. 4, 6. "Let them be confounded and put to shame, that seek after my soul; let them be turned back, and brought to confusion, that devise my hurt....Let their way be dark and slippery."

Such defence of God's Protestant church, and disappointment and confusion of all the subtle devices, deep laid schemes, and furious attempts of their Antichrist-

ian enemies, to bring them under, and root them out, and their seeing them still maintaining their ground, and subsisting in an independency on them, in spite of all that they do, makes them as it were gnash their teeth, and bite their tongues for mere rage and vexation; agreeable to Psal. cxii. 9, 10. "His righteousness endureth forever, his horn shall be exalted with honor: The wicked shall see it and be grieved, and gnash with his teeth and melt away: The desire of the wicked shall perish."

Hitherto this prophecy has been very signally fulfilled; since the reformation, the kingdom of Antichrist has been remarkably filled with darkness in this respect. Innumerable have been the crafty devices, and great attempts of the church of Rome, wherein they have exerted their utmost policy and power, to recover their lost dominions, and again to subjugate the Protestant nations, and subdue the northern heresy, as they call it. They have wearied themselves in these endeavors for more than two hundred years past. But have hitherto been disappointed; and have often been strangely confounded. When their matters seemed to be brought to a ripeness, and they triumphed as though their point was gained, their joy and triumph was suddenly turned into vexation and torment. How many have been their politic and powerful attempts against the Protestant interest in our nation, in particular? And how wonderfully has God disappointed them from time to time! And as God has hitherto so remarkably fulfilled his word in defending his Protestant church from Antichrist, so I think we have ground to trust in him, that he will defend it to the end.

5. The hypothesis of those that suppose the slaying of the witnesses is a thing that yet remains to be fulfilled, makes the prophecies of the Revelation to be inconsistent one with another. According to their hypothesis, that battle Rev. xi. 7, wherein the beast makes war with the witnesses, and overcomes them, and kills them, is the last and greatest conflict between Antichrist and the church of Christ, that is to precede the utter overthrow of the Antichristian kingdom. And they must suppose so; for they suppose that immediately

after the sufferings the church shall endure in that war, she shall arise, and as it were ascend into heaven; i. e. as they interpret it, the church shall be directly advanced to her latter day rest, prosperity and glory. And consequently, this conflict must be the same with that great battle between Antichrist and the church, that is described chap. xvi. 13, to the end, and more largely chap. xix. 11, to the end. For that which is described in these places, is most evidently and indisputably the greatest and last battle or conflict that shall be between the church and her Antichristian enemies; on which the utter downfall of Antichrist, and the church's advancement to her latter day glory, shall be immediately consequent. And so the earthquake that attends the resurrection of the witnesses chap. xi. 13, must be the same with that great earthquake that is described, chap. xvi. 18. And the falling of the tenth part of the city must be the same with that terrible and utter destruction of Antichrist's kingdom, chap. xvi. 17, to the end.

But these things cannot be. The battle chap. xi. 7, cannot be the same with that last and great battle between the church and Antichrist described, chap. xvi. and xix. For the things that are said of one and the other, and their issue, are in no wise consistent. In that battle, chap. xi. the church of God conflicts with her enemies in sorrow, sackcloth and blood: But in the other the matter is represented exceedingly otherwise; the church goes forth to fight with antichrist, not in sackcloth and blood, but clothed in white raiment, Christ himself before them, as their captain, going forth in great pomp and magnificence, upon a *white horse, and on his head many crowns, and on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords;* and the saints that follow so glorious a Leader to this great battle, follow him on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, in garments of strength, joy, glory and triumph; in the same kind of raiment, that the saints appear in, when they are represented as triumphing with Christ, with palms in their hands, chap. vii. 9. And the issue of the latter of these conflicts, is quite the reverse of the former. In that battle, chap. xi. 7. "The beast makes war

with the witnesses, and overcomes them and kills them." The same is foretold, Dan. vii. 21. "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them." And Rev. xii. 7. "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." But in the issue of that last and great battle, which the church shall have with her Antichristian enemies, the church shall overcome them, and kill them; Rev. xvii. 14. "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful," compared with chap. xix. 16, and following verses, and chap. xvi. 16, 17. In the conflict that the beast shall have with the witnesses, the "Beast kills them and their dead bodies lie unburied;" as though they were to be meat for the beasts of the earth, and fowls of heaven: But in that last great battle, it is represented that Christ and his church shall *slay their enemies, and give their dead bodies to be meat for the fowls of heaven,*" chap. xix. 17, to the end. There is no manner of appearance, in the descriptions that are given of that last great battle, of any advantages gained in it, by the enemies of the church, before they themselves are overcome; but all appearance of the contrary. Be sure the descriptions in the 16th and 19th chapters of the Revelation will by no means allow of such an advantage, as the overcoming of God's people, and slaying them, and their lying dead for some time, and unburied, that their dead bodies may be for their enemies to abuse, and trample on, and make sport with. In chap. xvi. we read of their being gathered together against the church, a mighty host, into the place called Armageddon; and then the first thing we hear of, is the pouring out of the seventh vial of God's wrath, and a voice saying *It is done.* And so in the 19th chapter, we have an account of "the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, being gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army." And then the next thing we hear of, is, that "the Beast is taken, and with him the false prophet; and that these are both cast alive into the lake of fire; and that the remnant

of the vast army are slain, and all the fowls filled with their flesh. The issue of the conflict of the beast with the witnesses is the triumph of the church's enemies over God's people, looking on them as entirely vanquished, and their interest utterly ruined, past all possibility of recovery: *They that dwell on the earth shall see the dead bodies of the saints lying in the streets of the great city, and shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and send gifts one to another.* But the issue of that great and last battle is quite the reverse; it is the church's triumph over her enemies as being utterly and forever destroyed.

Here if any one shall say, That the ascension of the witnesses into heaven in the sight of their enemies, may, as has more generally been supposed, signify the church's last victory and triumph over her Antichristian enemies, and final deliverance from them, and yet the battle between Antichrist and the witnesses, spoken of Rev. xi. 7, wherein the witnesses are slain, may not be the same with that last and greatest battle between Antichrist and the church, chap. xvi. and xix. that immediately precedes and issues in the church's final victory and deliverance; there may be two great battles, soon following one another, though both are not mentioned in the same place; one, a conflict wherein Antichrist prevails against the witnesses, and overcomes them, and kills them, and another, that great battle described chap. xvi. and xix. after the witnesses' resurrection, before their ascension into heaven, wherein they shall prevail and overcome their enemies, and kill them: I say, if any one shall say thus, they will say that which the prophecies give no reason for, nor allow any room to suppose. That last battle between the church and Antichrist, wherein Christ and his people obtain a complete victory, is evidently one of the greatest and most remarkable events foretold in all the Apocalypse: And there is no one thing, unless it be the consummation of all things, in the two last chapters, that is described in so solemn and august a manner. And the description shews that it is an event which, with its circumstances, must take up much time. There is vast preparation made for it by the church's enemies: The

devils, in order to stir men up, and gather them together, to this *battle of that great day of God Almighty, go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world*, to propagate various kinds of delusions, far and wide, all over the world; which undoubtedly must take up many years' time; chap. xvi. 13, 14. And then great preparation is made in the church of God, to make opposition; chap. xix. 11.....17. Now can any reasonably suppose, that in what is represented, chap. xi. of a great conflict between Antichrist and God's people, wherein the latter are overcome and slain, and lie dead three days (or three years) and an half, and their enemies triumphing over them, but God's people rising again from the dead in the midst of this triumph of their enemies, and ascending into heaven, while their enemies stand astonished and amazed spectators.....that the manner of the description leaves fair room for us to suppose, that after this resurrection of God's people, they continue long before they ascend, to encounter with Antichrist in a new conflict, wherein their enemies after long time to prepare, should engage with them with vastly greater preparation, strength, and violence than before, and should wage war with them with the mightiest army that ever was gathered against the church, and in the greatest battle that ever was fought?

And besides, the witnesses ascending into heaven in the sight of their enemies, spoken of chap. xi. cannot be the same with the church's gaining a glorious ascendant over her enemies, in her final victory over Antichrist, spoken of chap. xvi. and xix. because the descriptions of the events that attend the one and the other do by no means answer each other. For, observe, it is said that when the witnesses *arose, and stood on their feet, and ascended into heaven, the same hour there was a great earthquake:* But this does not seem to answer to what is described chap. xvi. 18. "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." It is said that at the time of the first earthquake, chap. xi. 13. "The tenth part of the city fell:" But how far does this fall short of what is described, as

attending the great earthquake? Chap. xvi. 19, 20. "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath; and every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." It is said of the earthquake, chap. xi. "And in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: But how far is this from answering the slaughter described chap. xix. 17, &c.? Which is represented as a general slaughter of the kings, captains, mighty men, horses, and armies of the earth, and of the whole world; so that all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, as far as the sun shines, are filled with the flesh of the dead carcases, it being the *flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great:* (Compare chap. xvi. 14.) Who can think, that this great slaughter that is thus represented, should in chap. xi. be only called a *slaying seven thousand men?*

If we read this very eleventh chapter through, we shall see that the falling of the tenth part of the city, and the witnesses rising and ascending into heaven, are entirely distinct from the final destruction of Antichrist, and that advancement of the church to her latter day glory, that is consequent upon it. The judgments here spoken of, as executed on God's enemies, are under another *woe;* and the benefits bestowed on the church, are under another *trumpet.* For immediately after the account of the rising and ascending of the witnesses, and the tenth part of the city's falling, and the slaying of the seven thousand men, and the affrighting of the rest, and their giving glory to the God of heaven, follow these words in the 14th and 15th verses, "The second woe is past; and behold the third woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." And in the following verses, we have an account of the praises sung to God on this occasion. And then in the last verse, we have a brief hint of that same earthquake, and that great hail, and those thunders and lightnings and voices, that we have an ac-

count of in the latter part of chap. xvi. So that the earthquake mentioned in the last verse of chap. xi. is that great earthquake that attends the last great conflict of the church and her enemies; and not that mentioned ver. 13.

The three woes are the woes of God on Antichrist and his subjects; and the third and last of them evidently signifies the terrible judgments of God on Antichrist, by which God's wrath upon him shall be fulfilled in his utter destruction: But the calamities on Antichrist spoken of as attending the rising and ascending of the witnesses, such as the falling of the tenth part of the city, and slaying seven thousand men, do not belong to this last woe, and therefore do not signify the final destruction of Antichrist: For the words of ver. 14, will by no means allow of such a supposition; for there, immediately after giving an account of these calamities, it is added, "The second woe is past; and behold the third woe cometh quickly:" Making a most plain and express distinction between these calamities that had already been mentioned, and especially these that were just then mentioned in the very last words, and the calamities that belong to the third woe, that yet remain to be mentioned: For by being passed, the prophet is to be understood no otherwise than passed in the declaration and representation; it was not past in any other respect: It is as much as to say, Thus an account has been given of the calamities upon Antichrist that belong to the second woe; now I proceed to give an account of those dispensations of Providence that belong to the third and last woe, which shall prove Antichrist's final destruction, and end in the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.

What was fulfilled in the reformation, well answers the representation made concerning the witnesses, Rev. xi. 11, 12. Of "the Spirit of Life from God entering into them, and their standing on their feet, and ascending up to heaven, in the sight of their enemies. A little before the reformation, the state of the church of God, and of true religion was lowest of all, and nearest to utter extinction. Antichrist had, after great and long struggles, prevailed against the Waldenses,

Albigenses and Bohemians. The war with the Albigenses seems especially to be intended by the war of the beast with the witnesses spoken of, ver. 7. These were witnesses to the truth, that were the most numerous and considerable, and those that most tormented the church of Rome. And the war that was maintained against them, was by far the greatest that ever Antichrist had against any of the professors of the truth, before the reformation; and was properly the war of the beast; it was the Pope that proclaimed the war, and that raised the soldiers by his emissaries and priests, preaching the cross, gathering innumerable multitudes of pilgrims from all parts of Christendom, and raising one crusade after another, which were conducted and managed by the Pope's legates; and it was the Pope that paid the soldiers with pardons, indulgences, promises of paradise, and such like trumpery. When Antichrist had gradually prevailed against these witnesses, with much difficulty, and long continued violent struggling, and after innumerable vexatious disasters and disappointments; the church of God, in the time of Luther and other reformers, on a sudden, in a wonderful manner revives, when such an event was least expected, (to the surprise and amazement of their Antichristian enemies) and appears in such strength, that the reformed are able to stand on their own legs, and to withstand all the power and rage of the church of Rome. Presently after this revival, the people of God are set on high, having the civil magistrate in many countries on their side, and henceforward have the power of many potent princes engaged for their protection: And this, in sight of their enemies, and greatly to their grief and vexation; who, though they from time to time exert their utmost, never are able to prevail against them, to bring them under any more, as they had done in former wars. Oftentimes in scripture, God's church's dwelling in safety, out of the reach of their enemies, is represented by their dwelling on high, or being set on high; as Psal. lix. 1, lxix. 29, xci. 14, cvii. 41. Prov. xxix. 25. Isa. xxxiii. 16. The children of Israel, in their deliverance out of Egypt, from their cruel task masters, that would fain have brought them into bondage again, were said

to be carried on eagle's wings, that is lofty in its flight, flies away towards heaven; so that the Egyptians could not come at them: And they were protected by the cloud that went with them; as the witnesses are said to be caught up to heaven in a cloud. Compare this with Isa. iv. 5. "And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence.

I shall not pretend to explain the mystery of the three days and half of the witnesses lying dead, or to determine the precise duration signified by that mystical representation. Possibly no particular measure of time may be intended by it; and yet it not be without significancy.* As no particular number of persons is intended by the two witnesses; but in general, it intends a small number, and yet a sufficient number; and as small as might be, and yet be sufficient; as, less than two witnesses was not sufficient: So perhaps no particular duration of that low state that the church was in before the reformation, may be intended by three days and half; but in general it may be hereby signified, that this time of the triumphing of the wicked, and extremity of God's church, should be but short. And possibly three days and half may be mentioned, because that is the utmost space of time that a dead body can be ordinarily supposed to lie without putrefaction; signifying that at this time the church should be brought to the very brink of utter ruin, and yet should be preserved and revive again. And half a day may be mentioned to signify the particular care of Providence in exactly determining this time of

* Mr. Lowman, in the preface to his Paraphrase on the Revelation, page 8, observes as follows: "Prophetic numbers do not always express a determinate duration or space of time, any more than they always express a certain number. Prophecy, I acknowledge, uses numbers sometimes as other expressions, in a figurative meaning, as symbols and hieroglyphics. Thus the number seven, sometimes does not denote the precise number seven: But figuratively denotes perfection, or a full and complete number: And the number ten, sometimes does not mean precisely ten in number, but many in general, or a considerable number."

the church's extremity. And probably there may be some reference to the three times (or three years) and an half of the witnesses prophecying in sackcloth; the more apparently to shew the disproportion between the time of the church's welfare, and the time of her enemies victory and triumph: The time of the church's affliction and conflict may be long; and in the issue she may be overcome; but the time of this victory shall be but short; in comparison with the other, but as a day to a year: She may as it were be killed, and lie dead, until she comes to the very brink of utter and hopeless ruin, but yet God will not suffer her to see corruption; but at that very time, when her enemies expected that she should putrify, she shall rise; and be set on high, out of their reach, greatly to their astonishment.

The grand objection against all this, is, that it is said, that *the witnesses should prophesy* twelve hundred and sixty *days clothed in sackcloth; and when they have finished their testimony, the beast should make war against them and kill them*, &c. and that it seems manifest, that after this, they are no longer in sackcloth, for henceforward they are in an exalted state in heaven: And that therefore, seeing the time of their wearing sackcloth, is twelve hundred and sixty days, which is the time of the continuance of Antichrist; hence their being slain and rising again, must be at the conclusion of this period, and so at the end of Antichrist's reign.

In answer to which I would say, that we can justly infer no more from this prophecy than this, viz. that the twelve hundred and sixty days is the proper time of the church's trouble and bondage, or being clothed in sackcloth; because it is the appointed time of the reign of Antichrist. But this does not hinder but that God, out of his great compassion to his church, should, in some respect, shorten the days, and grant that she should, in some measure, anticipate the appointed great deliverance that should be at the end of those days. As he has in fact done in the reformation; whereby the church has had a great degree of restoration granted, from the darkness and power of Antichrist, before her proper time of restoration, which is at the end of the twelve hundred and sixty days.....

Thus the church of Christ, through the tender mercies of her Father and Redeemer, in some respects, anticipates her deliverance from her sorrows and sackcloth: As many parts of the church are hereby brought from under the dominion of the Antichristian powers, into a state of power and liberty; though in other respects, the church may be said to continue in sackcloth, and in the wilderness, until the end of days; many parts of it still remaining under grievous persecution.

What we render, *when they shall have finished their testimony*, Mr. Lowman, from Mr. Daubuz, renders, *while they shall perform their testimony*; and observes, that the original may mean the time of their testimony, as well as the end of it.

I might here observe that we have other instances of God's shortening the days of his church's captivity and bondage, either at the beginning or end, very parallel with what has been now supposed in the case of the witnesses. Thus the proper time of the bondage of the posterity of Abraham in Egypt, was four hundred years; Gen. xv. 13. But yet God in mercy deferred the beginning of their bondage; whereby the time was much shortened at the beginning. So the time wherein it was foretold that the *whole land of Israel should be a desolation and an astonishment, and the land should enjoy her sabbaths*, by the *Babylonish captivity, was seventy years*; Jer. xxv. 11, 12, and these seventy years are dated in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20, 21, from Zedekiah's captivity; and yet, from that captivity to Cyrus's decree, was but fiftytwo years; though it was indeed seventy years before the more full restoration of the Jewish church and state by Darius's decree, Ezra vi. So the proper time of the oppression and bondage of the Jewish church under Antiochus Epiphanes, wherein *both the sanctuary and host should be trodden under foot by him*, was *two thousand three hundred days*; Dan. viii. 13, 14. The time from Antiochus's taking Jerusalem and polluting the sanctuary, to Antiochus's death, seems to have been about so long: But God shortened the days, by granting remarkable help to his people by means of the Maccabees, before that time: Yea the temple and sanctuary were restored, and the altar rebuilt and dedicated before that time.

Upon the whole, I think there appears to be no reason from the prophecy concerning the two witnesses, Rev. xi. to expect any such general and terrible destruction of the church of Christ, before the utter downfall of Antichrist, as some have supposed; but good reason to determine the contrary. It is true, there is abundant evidence in scripture, that there is yet remaining a mighty conflict between the church and her enemies, the most violent struggle of Satan and his adherents, in opposition to true religion, and the most general commotion that ever was in the world, since the foundation of it to that time; and many particular Christians, and some parts of the church of Christ, may suffer hard things in this conflict: But in the general, Satan and Antichrist shall not get the victory, nor greatly prevail; but on the contrary be entirely conquered, and utterly overthrown, in this great battle. So that I hope this prophecy of the slaying of the witnesses, will not stand in the way of a compliance with the proposal made to us in the memorial, as a prevalent objection and discouragement.

Object. 5. A late very learned and ingenious expositor of the Revelation, viz. Mr. Lowman, sets the fall of Antichrist, and consequently the coming of Christ's kingdom at a great distance; supposing that the twelve hundred and sixty years of Antichrist's reign did not begin until the year seven hundred and fifty six; and consequently that it will not end until after the year two thousand, more than two hundred and fifty years hence; and this opinion he confirms by a great variety of arguments.

Ans. 1. If this objection be allowed to be valid, and that which ought to determine persons in an affair of this nature, and those things, concerning God's people praying for this glorious event, be also allowed to be true, which before were shewn to be the will of God abundantly revealed in his word, then the following things must be supposed; viz. that it is the will of God that his people be much in prayer for this event, and particularly that it is God's revealed will and purpose, that, a little before the accomplishment of it, his people be earnestly seeking and waiting, and importunately and inces-

santly crying to God for it; But yet that it was God's design, that before this time comes of extraordinary prayer and importunity of his church, for the bringing on this glorious event, his church should have it given them to understand precisely when the appointed time should be; and that accordingly he has now actually brought the fixed time to light, by means of Mr. Lowman. But is it reasonable to suppose, that this should be God's manner of dealing with his church, first to make known to them the precise time which he has unalterably fixed for the shewing this mercy to Zion, and then make it the duty of his church, in an extraordinary manner, to be by prayer inquiring of him concerning it, and saying, *How long, Lord!* And waiting for it, day and night crying to him with exceeding importunity that he would bring it on, that he would come quickly, that he would hide himself no longer, but would arise and have mercy upon Zion, and awake as one out of sleep, openly manifest himself, and make bare his holy arm for the salvation of his people? That *they that make mention of the Lord, should not keep silence, nor give him any rest, until he establish, and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth?* And that the church should then say to Christ, *Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Spices?*

It may be many ways for the comfort and benefit of God's church in her afflicted state, to know that the reign of Antichrist is to be no more than 1260 years: And some things in general may be argued concerning the approach of it, when it is near: As the Jews could argue the approach of Christ's first coming, from Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks, though they knew not precisely when that seventy weeks would end. But it is not reasonable to expect that God should make known to us beforehand, the precise time of Christ's coming in his kingdom. The disciples desired to know this, and manifested their desire to their Lord; but he told them plainly that *it was not for them to know the times and seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power;* Acts i. 6,7, and there is no reason to think that it is any more for us than for them; or for Christ's disciples in these days any more than for his

apostles in those days. God makes it the duty of his church to be importunately praying for it, and praying that it may come speedily; and not only to be praying for it, but to be seeking of it, in the use of proper means; endeavoring that religion may now revive every where, and Satan's kingdom be overthrown; and always to be waiting for it, being in a constant preparation for it, as servants that wait for the coming of their Lord, or virgins for the coming of the bridegroom, not knowing at what hour he will come. But God's making known beforehand the precise time of his coming, does not well consist with these things.

It is the revealed will of God, that he should be inquired of by his people, by extraordinary prayer, concerning this great mercy, to do it for them, before it be fulfilled. And if any suppose, that it is now found out precisely when the time is to be, and (the time being at a considerable distance) that now is not a proper season to begin this extraordinary prayer, I would, on this supposition, ask, when we shall begin? How long before the fixed and known time of the bestowment of this mercy comes, shall we begin to cry earnestly to God that this mercy may come, and that Christ would make haste and be like a roe, &c? For us to delay, supposing that we know the time to be far off, is not agreeable to the language of God's people in my text, *Come, let us go speedily, and pray before the Lord, and seek the Lord of hosts.*

Ans. 2. I acknowledge that Mr. Lowman's exposition of the Revelation is, on many accounts, excellently written, giving great light into some parts of that prophecy, and an instance of the fulfilment of that prediction, Dan. xii. 4. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased:" And especially in his interpretation of the five first vials (which he supposeth already poured out) exceeding satisfying. But yet the opinion of Mr. Lowman, with regard to the particular time of the beginning and end of the time, times and an half of Antichrist's reign, and of all others that pretend to fix the time, is the less to be regarded, because it is clearly revealed, and expressly declared by God, that that matter should be sealed up and hid, and not known until the time of the end of

this time, times and an half. Daniel, in the last chapter of his prophecy, gives us an account, how the angel told him of a future time of great trouble and affliction to the church of God, and then said to him, ver. 4. "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end." And then the prophet proceeds to give an account of a vision that he had of one earnestly inquiring of the angel of the Lord, how long it would be to the end of this remarkable and wonderful time of the church's trouble, saying, *How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?* Ver. 5, 6. The answer was, that *it should be for a time, times and an half*, and that when so long a time was past, then this wonderful affliction and scattering of the holy people should be finished, ver. 7. But then Daniel tells us, in the next verse, that *he heard, but he understood not*, and said, *O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?* He did not understand that general and mystical answer, that those things should have an end at the end of a time, times and an half; he did not know by it, when this period would have an end: And therefore he inquires more particularly what the time of the end was. But the angel replies, ver. 9. "Go thy way, Daniel, the words are closed and sealed up, until the time of the end." I do not know what could have been more express. The angel gently rebukes this over inquisitiveness of Daniel, very much as Christ did a like inquisitiveness of the disciples concerning the same matter, when he said to them, *It is not for you to know the times and seasons, that the Father hath put in his own power.* I think there can be no doubt but that this space, of a time, times and half of the church's great trouble, about the end of which Daniel inquires, is the same with that time, times and half, that is spoken of Chap. vii. 25, and Rev. xii. 14, as the time of Antichrist's reign, and the church's being in the wilderness; and not merely the time of the church's troubles by Antiochus Epiphanes. But we see, when Daniel has a mind to know particularly when this time would come to an end, he is bid to go away, and rest contented in ignorance of this matter: For, says the man clothed in linen, *the words are closed up, and sealed, until the time of the end.* That is, very plainly,

the matter that you inquire about, when the end of this time, and times and half shall come, shall not be known, but kept a great secret, until the time of the end actually comes, and all attempts to find it out before that shall be in vain. And therefore when a particular divine appears, that thinks he has found it out, and has unsealed this matter, and made it manifest with very manifold and abundant evidence, we may well think he is mistaken, and doubt whether those supposed evidences are truly solid ones, and such as are indeed sufficient to make that matter manifest, which God has declared should be kept hid, and not made manifest before it is accomplished.

Mr. Lowman's own words in his preface, page 24, 25, are here worthy to be repeated: "It will (says he) ever be a point of wisdom, not to be over busy, or over confident in any thing, especially in fixing periods of time, or determining seasons; which it may be are not to be determined, it may be are not fit to be known. It is a maxim of greater wisdom than is usually thought, *Seek not to know what should not be revealed.* Such are many future events. The precise time of our Saviour's coming to judgment, was not revealed, because not fit to be revealed. The uncertainty of his appearance was of greater service to preserve a care of religion, than the revelation of it would have been: For the uncertainty itself gives many useful exhortations; *Watch, for ye know not what hour the son of man cometh.* Suppose then some of the events described in this prophecy should be of doubtful application, suppose the precise time of the downfall of the beast, the slaying and resurrection of the witnesses, and the beginning of a thousand years happy state of the church, should not be so determined, but it would admit of different calculations; may it not be wise, and therefore fit it should be so? The certainty of those events in a proper time, though that time should not be precisely determined, will answer the greater ends of useful instruction. And if the revelation should go no further than this, it would yet be a revelation, of great benefit and advantage; as the certainty of the day of judgment in its proper time surely is, though of that day and hour knoweth no man."

Ans. 3. Though it is not for us to know the precise time of the fall of Antichrist, yet I humbly conceive that we have no reason to suppose the event principally intended in the prophecies of Antichrist's destruction to be at so great a distance, as Mr. Lowman places it; but have reason to think it to be much nearer. Not that I would set up myself as a person of equal judgment with Mr. Lowman in matters of this nature. As he differs from most others of the most approved expositors of the Apocalypse, in this matter, so I hope it will not appear vanity and presumption in me, to differ from this particular expositor, and to agree with the greater number. And since his opinion stands so much in the way of that great and important affair, to promote which is the very end of this whole discourse, I hope it will not look as though I affected to appear considerable among the interpreters of prophecy, and as a person of skill in these mysterious matters, that I offer some reasons against Mr. Lowman's opinion. It is surely great pity, that it should be received as a thing clear and abundantly confirmed, that the glorious day of Antichrist's fall is at so great a distance (so directly tending to damp and discourage all earnest prayers for, or endeavors after its speedy accomplishment) unless there be good and plain ground for it. I would therefore offer some things to consideration, which I think may justly make us look upon the opinion of this learned interpreter, of this happy event's being at so great a distance, not so certain and indubitable, as to hinder our praying and hoping for its being fulfilled much sooner.

The period of Antichrist's reign, as their author has fixed it, seems to be the main point insisted on in his exposition of the revelation; which he supposes a great many things in the scheme of prophecies delivered in that book do concur to establish. And indeed it is so with respect to the scheme of interpretation of these prophecies, which he goes into, and finds it requisite to maintain, in order to confirm this point. But there are several things in that scheme, that appear to me justly liable to exception.

Whereas it is represented, Rev. xvii. 10, 11, that there are seven different successive heads of the beast; that five were past, and another was to come, and to continue a short space, that might on some accounts be reckoned a seventh; and that Antichrist was to follow next after this, as the eighth; but yet the foregoing not being properly one of the heads of the beast, he was properly the seventh; Mr. Lowman does not think with others, that by the seventh that was to continue a short space which would not be properly one of the heads of the beast, is meant Constantine and the other Christian emperors; (for he thinks they are reckoned as properly belonging to the sixth head of the beast) but that hereby is intended the government that Rome was subject to under the Gothic princes, and the exarchate of Ravenna, after the imperial form of government in Rome ceased in Augustulus, until the Pope was invested with his temporal dominion, called St. Peter's patrimony, by Pipin, King of France, in the year 756. And he supposes, that that wounding of one of the heads of the beast with a sword unto death, that we read of chap. xiii. 3, and 14, was not fulfilled in the destruction of the Heathen empire, and the giving the imperial power unto Christians, but in the destruction of the imperial form of government, by the sword of the Goths, in the time of Augustulus. But it seems to me to be very unlikely, that the spirit of God should reckon Constantine and the Christian emperors as proper members, and belonging to one of the heads, of that monstrous, wild and cruel beast, that is compared to a leopard and a bear, and a devouring lion, and that had a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and that rules by the power and authority of the dragon, or the devil;† which beast is represented in this very 17th chapter, as full of names of blasphemy, and of a bloody color, denoting his exceeding cruelty in persecuting the Christian Church. For Constantine, instead of this, was a member of the Christian church, and set by God in the most eminent station in his

† The word *Therion* signifies a wild savage beast, as Mr. Lowman himself observes, page 127.

church; and was honored above all other princes that ever had been in the world, as the great protector of his church, and her deliverer from the persecuting power of that cruel scarlet colored beast. Mr. Lowman himself styles him a Christian prince, and protector of the Christian religion. God is very careful not to reckon his own people among the Gentiles, the visible subjects of Satan; Num. xxiii. 9. "The people shall not be reckoned among the nations." God will not enrol them with them; if they happen to be among them, he will be careful to set a mark upon them, as a note of distinction; Rev. vii. 3, &c. when God is reckoning up his own people, he leaves out those that have been noted for idolatry. As among the tribes that were sealed Rev. viii. those idolatrous tribes of Ephraim and Dan are left out, and in the genealogy of Christ, Matth. i. those princes that were chiefly noted for idolatry, are left out. Much more would God be careful not to reckon his own people, especially such Christian princes as have been the most eminent instruments of overthrowing idolatry, amongst idolaters, and as members and heads of that kingdom that is noted in scripture as the most notorious and infamous of all, for abominable idolatry, and opposition and cruelty to the true worshippers of God. And especially not to reckon them as properly belonging to one of those seven heads of this monarchy, of which very heads it is particularly noted that they had on them the names of blasphemy; (Rev. xiii. 1.) which Mr. Lowman himself supposes to signify idolatry. It was therefore worthy of God, agreeable to his manner, and what might well be expected, that when he was reckoning up the several successive heads of this beast, and Constantine and his successors came in the way, and there was occasion to mention them, to set a mark, or note of distinction on them, signifying that they did not properly belong to the beast, nor were to be reckoned as belonging to his heads; and therefore are to be skipped over in the reckoning; and Antichrist, though the eighth head of the Roman Empire, is to be reckoned the seventh head of the beast. This appears to me abundantly the most just and natural interpretation of Rev. xvii. 10, 11. It is reasonable to

suppose that God would take care to make such a note in this prophetical description of this dreadful beast, and not by any means to reckon Constantine as belonging properly to him. If we reckon Constantine as a member of this beast, having seven heads and ten horns, described chap. xvii. and as properly one of his heads, then he was also properly a member of the great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, that warred with the woman, chap. xii. For the seven heads and ten horns of that dragon, are plainly the same with the seven heads and ten horns of this beast. So that this makes Constantine a visible member of the devil: For we are told expressly of that dragon, ver. 9, that he was "that old serpent, called the devil and Satan." And to suppose that Constantine is reckoned as belonging to one of the heads of that dragon, is to make these prophecies inconsistent with themselves. For here in this 12th chapter we have represented a war between the dragon and the woman clothed with the sun; which woman, as all agree, is the church; but Constantine, as all do also agree, belonged to the woman, was a member of the Christian church, and was on that side in the war against the dragon, yea, was the main instrument of that great victory that was obtained over the dragon, there spoken of, ver. 9....12. What an inconsistency therefore is it, to suppose that he was at the same time a member and head of that very dragon which fought with the woman, and yet which Constantine himself fought with, overcame, and gloriously triumphed over! It is not therefore to be wondered at, that God was careful to distinguish Constantine from the proper heads of the beast: It would have been a wonder if he had not. God seems to have been careful to distinguish him, not only in his word, but in his providence, by so ordering it that this Christian emperor should be removed from Rome, the city that God had given up to be the seat of the power of the beast and of its heads, and that he should have the seat of his empire elsewhere.

Constantine was made the instrument of giving a mortal wound to the heathen Roman empire; and giving it a mortal

wound in its head, viz. the heathen emperors that were then reigning, Maxentius and Licinius. But more eminently was this glorious change in the empire owing to the power of God's word, the prevalence of the glorious gospel, by which Constantine himself was converted, and so became the instrument of the overthrow of the heathen empire in the east and west. The change that was then brought to pass, is represented as the destruction of the heathen empire, or the old heathen world; and therefore seems to be compared to that dissolution of heaven and earth that shall be at the day of judgment, Rev. vi. 12, to the end. And therefore well might the heathen empire under the head which was then reigning, be represented as wounded to death, chap. xiii. 3. It is much more likely that the wound the beast had by a sword, in his head, spoken of ver. 14, was the wound that the heathen empire had in its head, by that sword that we read of chap. i. 16, and xix. 15, that proceeds out of the mouth of Christ, than the wound that was given to the Christian empire and emperor by the sword of the heathen Goths. It is most likely that this deadly wound was by that sword with which Michael made war with him, and overcame him, and cast him to the earth, chap. xii. 9, and that the deadly wound that was given him, was given him at that very time. It is most likely, that the sword that gave him this deadly wound, after which he strangely revived, as though he rose from the dead, was the same sword with that which is spoken of, as what shall at last utterly destroy him, so that he shall never rise more, chap. xix. 15, 19, 20, 21. This wounding of the head of the beast by the destruction of the heathen empire, and conversion of the emperor to the Christian truth, was a glorious event indeed of divine Providence, worthy to be so much spoken of in prophecy. It is natural to suppose, that the mortal wounding of the head of that savage, cruel beast, that is represented as constantly at war with the woman, and persecuting the church of Christ, should be some relief to the Christian church: But on the contrary that wounding to death that Mr. Lowman speaks of, was the victory of the enemies of the

Christian church over her, and the wound she received from them.

It is said of that head of the empire that shall be next after the sixth head, and next before Antichrist, and that is not reckoned as properly one of the number of the heads of the beast, that *when it comes, it shall continue a short space*, chap. xvii. 10. By which we may well understand, at least, that it shall be one of the shortest in its continuance, of the successive heads. But the government seated at Ravenna, in the hands of the Goths, or of the deputies of the Greek emperors, (which Mr. Lowman supposes to be meant by this head) continued, as Mr. Lowman himself takes notice, very near 300 years. And if so, its continuance was one of the longest of the heads mentioned.

And besides, if the government that Rome was under, from the time that Augustulus abdicated, to the time when the Pope was confirmed in his temporal dominion, was meant by that seventh head that was to be between the imperial head and the papal, there would doubtless have been two different heads mentioned, instead of one, between the emperor and the Pope; viz. First, the Gothic princes, which reigned near an hundred years: Secondly, the Exarchs of Ravenna, which governed for about 185 years. The Gothic kingdom was much more properly a distinct government from the imperial, than the Exarchate of Ravenna. For during the Exarchate, Rome was under the government of the emperor, as much as it was in Constantine's time.

In Rev. xvii. 12, it is said, the "ten horns are ten kings, which are to receive power as kings one hour with the beast, or (as Mr. Lowman says it ought to have been translated) "the same hour or point of time with the beast." This will not allow the time when Antichrist first receives power as king, to be so late as Mr Lowman supposes. This division of the empire into many kingdoms, denoted by the number ten, was about the year 456, after Gensericus had taken the city of Rome: But Mr. Lowman places the beginning of the reign of Antichrist in the year 756, which is 300 years later. I know, such an expression as in one hour, or the same hour,

may allow some latitude; but surely not such a latitude as this. This is a much longer time, than it was from the time of the vision to Constantine; much longer than the space of all the first six seals; longer than it was from Christs' ascension to Constantine; and near as long as the time of all the reigns of the heathen emperors put together, from Augustus Cæsar to Constantine. An hour is every where, in the other places in this book of Revelation, used to signify a very short time; as may be seen in places cited in the margin.* And the expression, the same hour, every where else in the Bible, intends near the same point of time.† The phrase one hour is used several times in the next chapter, speaking of the downfall of Antichrist:‡ And each time, evidently signifies a very short space of time. And there is no reason why we should not understand the same phrase in the same sense, when it is used here concerning the rise of Antichrist.

Mr. Lowman greatly insists upon it, that what is spoken as continuing 1260 days, is not so much any spiritual authority or ecclesiastical power of the Pope, over the nations of Christendom, as his temporal government and dominion in that individual city of Rome; and therefore to determine when these 1260 days or years began, and when they will end, we must consider when the Pope first received this his temporal power over this city of Rome, and the neighboring regions, called St. Peter's Patrimony. But I can see no good reason for this. Indeed it is strange, if it be so. God has been pleased in these revelations and prophecies, which he has given for the benefit of his church in general, to speak much concerning an Antichristian power that should arise, that should persecute the saints, and scatter the power of the holy people, and be an occasion of great affliction to the church of Christ; and in these revelations, in both old Testament and new, has declared, and often repeated it, that his dominion shall continue so long, and no longer; and for the comfort of his church in

* Rev. xviii. 10, 17, 19. Chap. xi. 3.....iii. 10.....viii. 3.....ix. 15.....xiv. 7.——† Dan. iii. 6.....iv. 33. v. 5. Mat. viii. 13.....x. 19. Luke vii. 21..... xii. 12.....xx. 19.....xxiv. 33. John iv. 53. Acts xvi. 18, 33.....xxii. 13. Rev. xi. 13.——‡ Verse 10, 17, 19.

general, Christ hath sworn with great solemnity, that the continuance of this persecuting power shall be thus limited; Dan. xii. 7.

Now it would be strange, if in all this the thing principally intended is not that dominion of this Antichristian power that chiefly concerns the church of Christ in general, but merely his temporal dominion over one province in Italy, called St. Peter's patrimony. Doubtless that dominion of Antichrist which the prophecies insist upon and describe, is the dominion whose duration and limits those prophecies declare. But the dominion of Antichrist which the prophecies insist upon and describe, is not any dominion over a particular province in Italy, but the dominion by which he succeeds the four great *monarchies of the world;* Dan. vii. The dominion by which he *succeeds the dragon in his power, throne and great authority;* Rev. xiii. 2. The dominion in which he has *power given him over all kindreds, tongues and nations;* ver. 7. The dominion by which *the great whore sits on many waters;* (chap. xvii. 1.) which the angel explains to be *peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues;* (ver. 15) and the dominion in which he *reigns over the ten kings,* into which the Roman empire is divided; Rev. xiii. 1, and xvii. 3, 12, 13. The beast that had ten horns, is not the city of Rome and the neighboring region, but the Roman empire; they are the horns or the kings, not of the city, but of the empire. If we consider what is expressed in the passages themselves, which speak of the three years and half of Antichrist, they will lead us to understand something very diverse from the duration of his temporal dominion over St. Peter's patrimony. In Dan. vii. 25, the time, times and an half, of the little horn, is expressly the continuance of time wherein *it shall be given to him to change times and laws, and wear out the saints of the Most High:* And in chap. xii. 7, it is spoken of as *the time of his scattering the power of the holy people:* In Rev. xi. 2, the forty and two months is spoken of as the time of Antichrist's *treading under foot the court of the temple and the holy city;* i. e. the external or visible Christian church abroad in the world, or the nations of Christendom. In ver. 3, the twelve hundred and sixty days

of Antichrist are spoken of as the time of the *witnesses prophesying in sackcloth*; and in chap. xii. 6, and 14. the time of the *woman's being in the wilderness*, which was through the great power that Antichrist had over the Christian world, and not his small temporal dominion in Italy.

It is true, some regard is had in the prophecies to the city of Rome, the city built on seven hills: Which, being the fountain of all rule and authority in the Roman monarchy, and the capital city of the empire, from whence the whole empire was denominated, and the place where the head of the empire usually resided, was properly made use of by the angel, Rev. xvii. 9, 18, to shew what empire Antichrist should rule over, and what city he should usually reside in. And this is all that can be meant by the words of the angel; and not that those streets and walls, and that very ground, were such main and essential things in what the prophecy intended by the beast; that when Antichrist's dominion began in that place, then the beast ceases. For if so, then it will follow, that the beast had his head wounded to death a second time, and ceased to be, when the Popes resided at Avignon in France, for the best part of a century; when not only the Popes did not reside at Rome, nor in any part of St. Peter's patrimony, nor any part of Italy; but some of them were neither Romans, nor Italians. Though the angel says of the great whore, Rev. xvii. 18. "The woman which thou sawest, is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth: Yet by the city, in this case, is not meant so much what was contained within those Roman walls, as the Roman empire; as is evident by chap. xi. 8. "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt." Here, by the great city, neither Mr. Lowman himself, nor I suppose any other Protestant interpreter, understands the city of Rome, strictly speaking, but the Roman monarchy.

And though it be true, as Mr. Lowman observes, the Pope's ecclesiastical monarchy, and power, and influence, through Christendom, was greatly established and advanced by Pepin's making him a temporal prince over the exarchate of Ravenna; yet, I would ask, whether the Pope's power and influence in

the world, and his ability to disturb the quiet of the nations of Christendom, and (as it is expressed in Daniel) *to change times and laws*, and to carry his own designs, in the various countries and kingdoms of Europe, was not greater before Pepin, than it is now, and has been for a long time? And yet Mr. Lowman supposes that now is properly the time of Antichrist's reign, that the twelve hundred and sixty years of his reign continues, and will continue for about two hundred and seventy years longer; though his power be now so small, and has been declining ever since the reformation, and still declines continually.

One thing that Mr. Lowman supposes confirms his opinion of so late a beginning of the twelve hundred and sixty years of the reign of the beast, is the order of the several periods of this prophecy, and the manner of their succeeding one another.

As to his particular scheme of the seven periods, so divided and limited, and so obviously ranked in such order, and following one another in such direct and continued succession, and each ending in a state of peace, safety and happiness to the church of God, it seems to me to be more ingenious than solid, and that many things might be said to demonstrate it not to be founded in the truth of things, and the real design of the divine Author of this prophecy. But now to enter into a particular and full examination of it, would be to lengthen out this discourse far beyond its proper limits. I would only observe (which directly concerns my present purpose) that to make out this scheme, Mr. Lowman supposes that the fifth and sixth trumpets, that bring on the two first woes, and the whole 9th chapter of the Revelation, altogether respects the Saracens. But it appears to me not very credible that the Saracens should have so much said of them in this prophecy, as to have a whole chapter taken up about them, and not a word in the whole prophecy be said about the Turks, who immediately succeeded them * in the same religion, and pro-

* For though it be true, that the reign of Othman, or Ottoman, who began what they call the Ottoman empire, was a long time after this; yet the Turks

ceeding on the same principles, and were so much more considerable, and brought vastly greater calamities on the Christian world, and have set up and long maintained one of the greatest, strongest and most extraordinary empires that ever the world saw, and have been the most terrible scourge to Christendom, that ever divine providence made use of, and one of the greatest of all God's plagues on the world of mankind.

Mr. Lowman, in pursuance of his scheme, also supposes, (which is yet more incredible) this period of the trumpets ends in *a state of safety, peace and happiness to the church of God*; so that, on that occasion, *there are great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ*, chap. xi. 15.* And yet he supposes, that it issues in setting up the kingdom of Antichrist; and that about that very time, when these heavenly voices so joyfully proclaimed this, the beast was enthroned, and the time, times and half, or twelve hundred and sixty days of his reign began, which is spoken of every where, as the time of the church's greatest darkness and trouble, the time wherein *the little horn should wear out the saints of the Most High*, Dan. vii. 25. *The time appointed for his scattering the power of the holy people*, Dan. xii. 7. *The time of the woman's being in the wilderness*, Rev. xii. 6, 14. The time of *treading under foot the court of the temple*, chap. xi. 2. And the time of *the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth*, chap. xi. 3.

However, I do not deny that the time when Mr. Lowman supposes the reign of the beast began, even the time when Pepin confirmed to the Pope his temporal dominions in Italy, was a time of the great increase and advancement of the power of Antichrist in the world, and a notable epoch. And if I may be allowed humbly to offer what appears to me to be the

themselves, under other princes in the government they set up in territories that had formerly been possessed by Christians, and in their overrunning and ravaging Christian countries, immediately succeeded the Saracens; and from thenceforward have been a terrible, and almost continual scourge to the church.

* Preface of his Paraphrase, &c. p. 13, 14, and 16.

truth with relation to the rise and fall of Antichrist; it is this: As the power of Antichrist, and the corruption of the apostate church, rose not at once, but by several notable steps and degrees; so it will in the like manner fall: And that divers steps and seasons of destruction to the spiritual Babylon, and revival and advancement of the true church, are prophesied of under one. Though it be true, that there is some particular event, that prevails above all others in the intention of the prophecy, some one remarkable season of the destruction of the church of Rome and papal power and corruption, and advancement of true religion, that the prophecies have a principal respect to.

It was certainly thus with regard to the prophecies of the destruction of old Babylon, and the church's deliverance from captivity and oppression by that city and kingdom; which is abundantly alluded to in these prophecies of the Revelation, as a noted type of the oppression of the church of Christ by the church of Rome, calling the latter so often by the name of Babylon, and the church of Christ Jerusalem. The captivity of the Jews by the Babylonians was not perfected at once, but was brought on by several notable steps. So neither was the restoration of the Jewish church, after the captivity, perfected at once. It was several times foretold, that the duration of the captivity should be seventy years; and also, that after seventy years were accomplished, God would destroy Babylon; Jer. xxv. 11, 12, &c. But this period had manifestly several different beginnings, and several endings. Thus from Jehoiakim's captivity to Cyrus's decree, for the return of the Jews, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, was seventy years. And from Zedekiah's captivity to Darius's decree, Ezra vi. seventy years. And from the last carrying away of all, Jer. lii. 30, to the finishing and dedication of the temple, was also seventy years. So also the prophecies of Babylon's destruction were fulfilled by several steps. These prophecies seem to have a principal respect to that destruction that was accomplished by Cyrus, at the end of the first seventy years forementioned: But there were other things in the very same prophecies, that were not fulfilled until the 4th year of Darius; when what remained

of Babylon was subject to another dreadful destruction; which in a great measure completed its desolation; which was at the end of the second seventy years, and at the same time that the restoration of the Jews was perfected by the decree of Darius.* But yet, there were many other things contained in the same prophecies of Babylon's destruction, rendering it thenceforward perfectly and perpetually desolate, and the haunt of serpents and wild beasts, that were not fulfilled until more than two hundred years after, in the time of Seleucus king of Syria.† So also it was with respect to the prophecies of the destruction of Tyre, in the xxvith, xxviith and xxviiith chapters of Ezekiel; from which many of the expressions used in the revelation, concerning the destruction of the kingdom of Antichrist, are taken, and which is evidently made use of in scripture as a type of the latter. These prophecies of the destruction of Tyre were fulfilled by various steps. Many things were fulfilled in the destruction of the old city by Nebuchadnezzar;‡ and yet other parts of the same prophecy were fulfilled by Alexander;§ which was about two hundred and forty years afterwards. And yet both these desolations are prophesied of under one.

And thus it seems to me very probable, that it will prove, with respect to the prophecies of the destruction of mystical Babylon. It is I think pretty manifest by the prophecies, that this Antichristian hierarchy and apostate church will at last be so destroyed, that there shall be no remainders of it left, and shall have as perfect a desolation, before God has done with her, as old Babylon had; there shall be no such thing as Pope or church of Rome in the world.‖ It seems also pretty manifest that after that event that is chiefly intended in the prophecies of Antichrist's destruction, there will be some remains of the Romish church. This appears by that most particular and large description of that destruction, Rev. xviii. There it seems to be implied, not only that many shall yet

* Prideaux's Connexion, Part I. p 183, 184, and 267, 268, 269. Edit. 9, and p. 271, and 272.——† Ibid. 808.....812.——‡ Ibid. 128, 129, 130. § Ibid. p. 693.——‖ See Rev. xviii. 21,....23....,and xix. 20, 21. Dan. vii. 26, 27.

remain of the church of Rome, that shall bewail her overthrow, of her people and clergy; ver. 11, 15, 17, 18, but that there should be some princes among them, kings of the earth, that have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her; ver. 9, 10. And it is exceeding improbable in itself, that every Papist, in each quarter of the world, should be destroyed, or cease from the world, at one blow. And as long as so considerable a number remains, as may be gathered from the prophecy, they will doubtless have an hierarchy; and there will be one among them that will bear the name of a Pope. Although the church of Rome shall be mainly destroyed, and the interest of Popery shall be sunk very low in the world; so that there will yet remain such a thing as a Papal church and hierarchy in the world, to be wholly extirpated at another period, sometime after that great overthrow principally insisted on in the prophecies. And this second destruction of Antichrist, or rather extirpation of his remains, together with the complete extirpation of all the remains of Mahometanism, Heathenism and Heresy through the world, and the finishing stroke towards the overthrow of Satan's visible kingdom on earth, and so the beginning of the Millennium or spiritual rest of the world, may, for ought I know, be about the time Mr. Lowman speaks of; agreeable to the opinion of the ancient Jews, and many Christian divines that have followed them, that the world would stand six thousand years; and then, the seventh thousand years should be the world's rest or Sabbath. The ruin of the Popish interest is but a small part of what is requisite, in order to introduce and settle such a state of things, as the world is represented as being in, in that Millennium that is described, Rev. xx. wherein Satan's visible kingdom is every where totally extirpated, and a perfect end put to all heresies, delusions and false religions whatsoever, through the whole earth, and Satan thenceforward deceives the nations no more, and has no place any where but in hell. This is the sabbatism of the world; when all shall be in a holy rest, when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and there shall be nothing to hurt or offend, and there shall be abundance of peace, and the earth shall be full of the knowl-

edge of the Lord as the waters cover the seas, and God's people shall dwell in quiet resting places. There is not the least reason to think, that all this will be brought to pass as it were at one stroke, or that from the present lamentable state of things, there should be brought about and completed the destruction of the church of Rome, the entire extirpation of all infidelity, heresies, superstitions and schisms, through all Christendom, and the conversion of all the Jews, and the full enlightening and conversion of all Mahometan and Heathen nations, through the whole earth, on every side of the globe, and from the north to the south pole, and the full settlement of all in the pure Christian faith and order, all as it were in the issue of one battle, and by means of the victory of the church in one great conflict with her enemies. This would contradict many things in scripture, which represent this great event to be brought to pass by a gradual progress of religion; as leaven that gradually spreads, until it has diffused itself through the whole lump; and a plant of mustard, which from a very small seed, gradually becomes a great tree; Mat. xiii. 31, 32, 33, *and like seed which a man casts into the ground, that springs and grows up, night and day; and first brings forth the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.* And especially would this contradict the prophetical representation in Ezek. xlvii. where the progress of religion is represented by the gradual increase of the waters of the sanctuary; being first a small spring issuing out from under the threshold of the temple; and then, after they had run a thousand cubits, being up to the ankles; and at the end of another thousand cubits, up to the knees; and at the end of another thousand, up to the loins; and afterwards a great river, that could not be passed over; and being finally brought into the sea, and healing the waters even of the vast ocean.

If the Spirit of God should be immediately poured out, and that great work of God's power and grace should now begin, which in its progress and issue should complete this glorious effect; there must be an amazing and unparalleled progress of the work and manifestation of divine power to bring so much to pass, by the year two thousand. Would it not be a great

thing, to be accomplished in one half century, that religion, in the power and purity of it, should so prevail, as to gain the conquest over all those many things that stand in opposition to it among Protestants, and gain the upper hand through the protestant world? And if in another, it should go on so to prevail, as to get the victory over all the opposition and strength of the kingdom of Antichrist, so as to gain the ascendent in that which is now the Popish world? And if in a third half century, it should prevail and subdue the greater part of the Mahometan world, and bring in the Jewish nation, in all their dispersions? And then in the next whole century, the whole heathen world should be enlightened and converted to the Christian faith, throughout all parts of Africa, Asia, America and Terra Australis, and be thoroughly settled in Christian faith and order, without any remainders of their old delusions and superstitions, and this attended with an utter extirpation of the remnant of the church of Rome, and all the relics of Mahometism, heresy, schism and enthusiasm, and a suppression of all remains of open vice and immorality, and eevry sort of visible enemy to true religion, through the whole earth, and bring to an end all the unhappy commotions, tumults, and calamities occasioned by such great changes, and all things so adjusted and settled through the world, that the world thenceforward should enjoy an holy rest or sabbatism?

I have thus distinguished what belongs to a bringing of the world from its present state, to the happy state of the Millennium, the better to give a view of the greatness of the work; and not, that I pretend so much as to conjecture, that things will be accomplished just in this order. The whole work is not the less great and wonderful, to be accomplished in such a space of time, in whatever order the different parts of it succeed each other. They that think that what has been mentioned would not be swift progress, yea amazingly swift, do not consider how great the work is, and the vast and innumerable obstacles that are in the way. It was a wonderful thing, when the Christian religion, after Christ's ascension, so prevailed, as to get the ascendant in the Roman empire in about three hundred years; but that was nothing to this.

Ans. 4. There are, as I apprehend, good reasons to hope, that that work of God's Spirit will begin in a little time, which, in the progress of it, will overthrow the kingdom of Antichrist, and in its issue destroy Satan's visible kingdom on earth.

The prophecy of the 6th vial, Rev. xvi. 12.....16, if we take it in its connexion with the other vials, and consider those providential events, by which the preceding vials have manifestly been fulfilled, I humbly conceive, affords just ground for such a hope.

It is very plain from this whole chapter, as also the preceding and following, that all these seven vials are vials of God's wrath on Antichrist; one is not poured out on the Jews, another on the Turks, another on Pagans, another on the church of Rome; but they all signify God's successive judgments or plagues on the beast and his kingdom, which is in this chapter and almost every where in this book, called great Babylon. And therefore undoubtedly, when it is said, *The sixth Angel poured out his vial on the river Euphrates, and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the Kings of the east might be prepared;* by the river Euphrates is meant something some way appertaining to this mystical Babylon; as that river that ran through Chaldea, called Euphrates, was something appertaining to the literal Babylon. And it is very manifest, that here is in the prophecy of this vial an allusion to that by which the way was prepared for the destruction of Babylon by Cyrus; which was by turning the channel of the river Euphrates, which ran through the midst of the city, whereby the way of the kings of the east, the princes of Media and Persia, was prepared to come in under the walls of the city, at each end, where the waters used to run, and destroy it; as they did that night wherein Daniel interpreted the hand writing on the wall, against Belshazzar, Dan. v. 30. The prophecies of Babylon's destruction, do from time to time take notice of this way of destroying her, by drying up the waters of the river Euphrates, to prepare the way for her enemies; Isa. xliv. 27, 28. *That saith to the deep, be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; that saith of Cyrus, he is my servant,*

and shall perform all my pleasure. Jer. li. 31, 32. *One post shall run to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end, and that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burnt with fire, and the men of war are affrighted.* And verse 36. *I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry.* The Medes and Persians, the people that destroyed Babylon, dwelt to the eastward of Babylon, and are spoken of as coming from the east to her destruction; Isa. xlvi. 11. *Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel, from a far country.* And the princes that joined with this ravenous bird from the east, in this affair of destroying Babylon, are called kings, Jer. li. 11. *The Lord hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes; for his device is against Babylon to destroy it.* Ver. 28. *Prepare against her the nations, with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and the rulers thereof.*—The drying the channel of the river Euphrates, to prepare the way for these kings and captains of the east, to enter into that city, under its high walls was the last thing done by the besiegers of Babylon, before her actual destruction: As this sixth vial is the last vial of God's wrath but one, on the mystical Babylon; and the effect of it, the drying up the channel of the river Euphrates, is the last thing done against it, before its actual destruction by the seventh vial, and opens the way for those that fight in a spiritual war against it, speedily to bring on its ruin.

Hence I think it may without dispute be determined, that by the river Euphrates in the prophecy of this vial, is meant something appertaining or relating to the mystical Babylon, or the Antichristian church and kingdom, that serves that, or is a benefit to it, in a way answerable to that in which the river Euphrates served old Babylon, and the removal of which will in like manner prepare the way for her enemies to destroy her. And therefore what we have to do in the first place, in order to find out what is intended by the river Euphrates, in this prophecy, is to consider how the literal Euphrates served old Babylon. And it may be noted, that Euphrates was of remarkable benefit to that city in two respects: It served the city as a supply; it was let through the midst of

the city by an artificial canal, and ran through the midst of the palace of the king of Babylon; that part of his palace called the old palace, standing on one side, and the other part called the new palace, on the other; with communications from one part to another, above the waters, by a bridge, and under the waters, by a vaulted or arched passage; that the city, and especially the palace, might have the convenience of its waters, and be plentifully supplied with water. And another way that the waters of Euphrates served Babylon, was as an impediment and obstacle in the way of its enemies, to hinder their access to it to destroy it. For there was a vast moat round the city, without the walls, of prodigious width and depth, filled with the water of the river, to hinder the access of her besiegers: And at each end of the city, the river served instead of walls. And therefore when Cyrus had dried up the river, the moat was emptied, and the channel of the river under the walls left dry; and so his way was prepared.

And therefore it is natural to suppose, that by drying up the waters of the river Euphrates, in the prophecies of the destruction of the new Babylon, to prepare the way of her enemies, is meant the drying up her incomes and supplies; and the removal of those things that hitherto have been the chief obstacles in the way of those that in this book are represented as at war with her and seeking her destruction, spoken of Rev. xix. 11, to the end, and Chap. xii. 7, that have hindered their progress and success, or that have been the chief impediments in the way of the Protestant religion. The first thing is the drying the streams of the wealth of the new Babylon, the temporal supplies, revenues and vast incomes of the Romish church, and riches of the Popish dominions. Waters in scripture language very often signify provision and supplies, both temporal and spiritual; as in Prov. ix. 17. Isa. xxxiii. 16....xliii. 20.....lv. 1.....and lviii. 11. Jer. ii. 13 and 18. xvii. 8 and 13, and in other places innumerable. The temporal supplies of a people are very often in scripture called waters; as Isa. v. 13. *Therefore my people is gone into captivity, and their honorable men are famished, and their multitude*

dried up with thirst. i. e. deprived of the supports and supplies of life. And the drying up the waters of a city or kingdom, is often used in scripture prophecy, for the depriving them of their wealth, as the scripture explains itself, Hos. xiii. 15. "His spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up; he shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels." Isa. xv. 6, 7. "The waters of Nimrim shall be desolate; for the hay is withered away; the grass faileth; there is no green thing. Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows." By the brook of the willows there seems to be a reference to the waters of Assyria or Chaldea, whose streams abounded with willows (compare Psal. cxxxvii. 2.) So that the carrying away the treasures of Moab, and adding of them to the treasures of Assyria, is here represented by the figure of turning away the waters of Nimrim from the country of Moab, and adding them to the waters of Assyria, as the prophecy explains itself. Yea, even in the prophecies of the destruction of Babylon itself, the depriving her of her treasures, seems to be one thing intended by the drying up of her waters. This seems manifest by the words of the prophecy in Jer. l. 37, 38. "A sword is upon her treasures, and they shall be robbed; a drought is upon her waters, and they shall be dried up." Compared with chap. li. 13. "O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures;" with ver. 36. "I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry." The wealth, revenues and the vast incomes of the church of Rome, are the waters by which that Babylon has been nourished and supported; these are the waters which the Popish clergy and the members of the Romish hierarchy thirst after, and are continually drinking down, with insatiable appetite; and they are waters that have been flowing into that spiritual city like a great river; ecclesiastical persons possessing a very great part of the Popish dominions: As this Babylon is represented as vastly rich, in this prophecy of the Apocalypse, especially in the 17th and 18th chapters. These are especially the waters that supply the palace of the king of this new Babylon, viz. the Pope; as the river Euphrates ran

through the midst of the palace of the king of old Babylon. The revenues of the Pope have been like the waters of a great river, coming into his palace, from innumerable fountains, and by innumerable branches and lesser streams, coming from many various and distant countries.

This prophecy represents to us two cities very contrary the one to the other; viz. New Babylon and the New Jerusalem, and a river running through the midst of each. The new Jerusalem, which signifies the church of Christ, especially in her best estate, is described as having a river running through the midst of it, Rev. xxii. 1, 2. This river, as might easily be made most evident, by comparing this with abundance of other scriptures, undoubtedly signifies the divine supplies, and rich and abundant spiritual incomes and provision of that holy city. Mr. Lowman, in his late exposition, says, *It represents a constant provision for the comfortable and happy life of all the inhabitants of this city of God.* And in his notes on the same place, observes as follows; "Water, (says he) as necessary to the support of life, and as it contributes in great cities, especially in hot eastern countries, to the ornament of the place, and delight of the inhabitants, is a very proper representation of the enjoyment of all things, both for the support and pleasure of life." As the river that runs through the new Jerusalem, the church of Christ, that refreshes that holy spiritual society, signifies their spiritual supplies, to satisfy their spiritual thirst; so the river that runs through the new Babylon, the Antichristian church, that wicked carnal society, signifies, according to the opposite character of the city, her worldly, carnal supplies, to satisfy their carnal desires and thirstings.

This new Jerusalem is called in this book the paradise of God; and therefore is represented as having the tree of life growing in it, Chap. ii. 7, and xxii. 2. And it being described, as though a river ran through the midst of it, there seems to be some allusion to the ancient paradise in Eden, of which we are told that there ran a river through the midst of it to water it; Gen. ii. 10. i. e. to supply the plants of it with nourishment. And this river was this very same river Euphrates, that afterwards ran through Babylon. And in one and the other,

it represented the divers supplies of two opposite cities: In Eden, it represented the spiritual supplies and wealth of the true Christian church, in her spiritual advancement and glory; and seems to be so made use of Rev. xvii. 1, 2. In the other it represented the outward carnal supplies of the false Antichristian church, in her worldly pomp and vain glory, chap. xvi. 12.

When the waters that supply this mystical Babylon, come to be dried up in this sense, it will prepare the way for the enemies of Antichristian corruption, that seek her overthrow. The wealth of the church of Rome, and of the powers that support it, is very much its defence. After the streams of her revenues and riches are dried up, or very greatly diminished, her walls will be as it were broken down, and she will become weak and defenceless, and exposed to easy ruin.

When Joab had taken that part of the city of Rabbah, that was called the city of waters, whence the city had its supply of water, the fountains of the brook Jabbok being probably there; and which was also called the royal city, probably because there the king had his palace and gardens, on the account of its peculiar pleasantness; I say, when he had taken this, the conquest of the rest of the city was easy; his message to David implies that the city now might be taken at pleasure, 2 Sam. xii. 27, 28. It is possible that by the pouring out of the sixth vial to dry up the river of the mystical Babylon, there may be something like the taking the city of waters in Rabbah; some one of the chief of the Popish powers, that has been the main strength and support of the Popish cause, or from whence that church has its chief supplies, may be destroyed, or converted, or greatly reduced. But this, events must determine.

In the prophecies of Egypt's destruction, it is signified, that when their rivers and waters should be dried up, in that sense, that the streams of their temporal supplies should be averted from them, their defence would be gone; Isa. xix. 4, &c. "The Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up, and the brooks of defence shall be emp-

tied and dried up, and the reeds and flags shall wither; every thing sown by the brooks shall wither: The fishers also shall mourn."

Those whose way was prepared to come in and destroy Babylon, by the drying up the river of Euphrates, were the army that was at war with Babylon, Cyrus the king, and his host, that sought her overthrow: So there seems to be all reason to suppose, that those whose way will be prepared to come in and destroy mystical Babylon, by drying up the mystical Euphrates, are that king and army that are in this book of Revelation represented as at war with Antichrist. And what king and army that is, we may see in chap. xii. 7, and xix. 11, to the end: Michael the king of angels, and his angels; he whose name is called the word of God, and that has on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; and the heavenly armies that follow him, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. Cyrus the chief of the kings of the east, that destroyed Babylon, and redeemed God's church from thence, and restored Jerusalem, seems in that particular affair very manifestly to be spoken of as a type of Christ; God calls him his shepherd, to perform his pleasure, to say to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built, and to the temple, thy foundation shall be laid, Isa. xliv. 28. God calls him his Messiah; chap. xlv. 1. "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed (in the original, to his Messiah) to Cyrus." He is spoken of as one that God had raised up in righteousness, that he might build his city, and freely redeem his captives, or let them go without price or reward, chap. xlv. 13. He is said to be one whom God had loved, chap. xlviii. 14. In like manner as the Messiah is said to be God's elect, in whom his soul delighteth. As by Babylon, in the Revelation, is meant that Antichristian society that is typified by old Babylon; so by the kings of the east, that should destroy this Antichristian church, must be meant those enemies of it that were typified by Cyrus and other chieftains of the east, that destroyed old Babylon; viz. Christ, who was born, lived, died and rose in the east together with those spiritual princes that follow him, the principalities and powers in heavenly places, and those minis-

ters and saints that are kings and priests, and shall reign on earth; especially those leaders and heads of God's people, those Christian ministers and magistrates, that shall be distinguished as public blessings to his church, and chief instruments of the overthrow of Antichrist.

As the river Euphrates served the city of Babylon as a supply, so as it also was before observed, it served as an impediment or obstacle to hinder the access of its enemies: As there was a vast moat round the city, filled with the water of the river, which was left empty when Euphrates was dried up. And therefore we may suppose that another thing meant by the effect of the sixth vial, is the removal of those things which hitherto have been the chief obstacles in the way of the progress of the true religion, and the victory of the church of Christ over her enemies: Which have been the corrupt doctrines and practices that have prevailed in Protestant countries and the doubts and difficulties that attend many doctrines of the true religion, and the many divisions and contentions that subsist among Protestants. The removal of those would wonderfully prepare the way for Christ and his armies, to go forward and prevail against their enemies, in a glorious propagation of true religion. So that this vial which is to prepare the way for Christ and his people, seems to have respect to that remarkable preparing the way for Christ, by levelling mountains, exalting valleys, drying up rivers, and removing stumbling blocks, which is often spoken of in the prophecies, as what shall next precede the church's latter day glory; as Isa. xlii. 13, &c. "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man; he shall stir up jealousy as a man of war; he shall prevail against his enemies. I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools; and I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not, and I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight: These things will I do unto them and not forsake them." Chap. xl. 3, 4, 5. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert an highway for our God: Every valley shall be exalted, and

every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight and rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." Chap. xi. 15, 16. "And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea, and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams thereof, and make men go over dry shod: And there shall be an high way for the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, like as it was to Israel, in the day that he came out of the land of Egypt." Chap. lvii. 14. "Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people." And chap. lxii. 10. "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the high way; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people." Zech. x. 10, 11, 12. "I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them. And he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves of the sea; and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: And the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away: And I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord." And it is worthy to be remarked that as Cyrus' destroying Babylon, and letting go God's captives from thence, and restoring Jerusalem, is certainly typical of Christ's destroying mystical Babylon, and delivering his people from her tyranny, and gloriously building up the spiritual Jerusalem in the latter days; so God's preparing Cyrus's way, by drying up the river Euphrates, is spoken of in terms like those that are used in those prophecies that have been mentioned, to signify the preparing Christ's way, when he shall come to accomplish the latter event. Thus God says concerning Cyrus, Isa. xlv. 2. "I will go before thee, and make crooked places straight." And ver. 13. "I will direct, or make straight (as it is in the margin) all his ways." This is like chap. xl. 2, 4. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert an highway

for our God. The crooked things shall be made straight." Chap. xlii. 16. "I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight."

If any should object against understanding the river Euphrates in Rev. xvi. 12, as signifying what has been supposed, that when mention is made of the river Euphrates, in another place in this prophecy, it is manifesly not so to be understood, viz. in chapter ix. 14. "Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates; and that there is no reason to understand the river Euphrates in the vision of the sixth vial, as signifying something diverse from what is meant by the same river in the vision of the sixth trumpet;

I answer, That there appears to me to be good reason for a diverse understanding of the river Euphrates in these two different places: The diversity of the scene of the vision, and of the kind of representation, in those two divers parts of this prophecy, naturally leads to it, and requires it. It is in this book as it is in the Old Testament; when the river Euphrates is spoken of in the Old Testament, both in the histories and prophecies, it is mentioned with regard to a twofold relation of that river; viz. 1st. With regard to its relation to Babylon. And as it was related to that, it was something belonging to that city, as its defence and supply, as has been represented. Thus the river Euphrates is spoken of in many places that have been already observed, and others that might be mentioned. 2dly. This river is spoken of with regard to its relation to the Land of Israel, God's visible people. And as it was related to that, it was its eastern boundary. It is so spoken of Gen. xv. 18. Exod. xxiii. 31. Deut. i. 7, and xi. 24. Josh. i. 4. 2 Sam. viii. 3. 1 Chron. xviii. 3. 1 Kings iv. 21. Ezra iv. 20. Agreeable to this diverse respect or relation of this river, under which it is mentioned in the Old Testament, so must we understand it differently in different parts of the prophecy of this book of revelation, according as the nature and subject of the vision requires. In the 16th chapter where the prophecy is about Babylon, and the vision is of God's plagues on Babylon, preparing the way for her de-

struction, there, when the river Euphrates is mentioned, we are naturally and necessarily led to consider it as something belonging to Babylon, appertaining to the mystical Babylon, as Euphrates did to old Babylon. But we cannot understand it so in the 9th chapter, for there the prophecy is not about Babylon. To mention Euphrates there, as something belonging to Babylon, would have been improper; for the nature of the vision, and prophetical representation, did not lead to it, nor allow it. John had had no vision of Babylon; that kind of representation had not been made to him; there is not a word said about Babylon until we come to the second part of this prophecy, after John had the vision of the second book, and Christ had said to him, *Thou must prophesy again before peoples, and nations, and kings*, chap. xi. The scene of the vision, in the former part of the prophecy, had been more especially the land of Israel; and the vision is concerning two sorts of persons there, viz. Those of the tribes of Israel that had the seal of God in their foreheads, and those wicked apostate Israelites that had not this mark. Compare chap. vii. 3.....8, and chap. ix. 4. The vision in this 9th chapter is of God's judgments on those of the tribes of Israel, or in the land of Israel, which had not the seal of God in their foreheads. And therefore when mention is made, ver. 14, of a judgment coming on them from the river Euphrates, this river is here spoken of in the former respect viz. with regard to its relation to the land of Israel, as its eastern border; and thereby we must understand that God would bring some terrible calamity on Christendom from its eastern border, as he did when the Turks were let loose on Christendom.

If these things that have been spoken of, are intended in the prophecy of the sixth vial, it affords, as I conceive, great reason to hope that the beginning of that glorious work of God's Spirit, which, in the progress and issue of it, will overthrow Antichrist, and introduce the glory of the latter days, is not very far off.

Mr. Lowman has, I think, put it beyond all reasonable doubt, that the fifth vial was poured out in the time of the reformation. It also appears satisfyingly, by his late exposi-

tion, that take one vial with another, it has not been two hundred years from the beginning of one vial to the beginning of another, but about one hundred and eighty years. But it is now about two hundred and twenty years since the fifth vial began to be poured; and it is a long time since the main effects of it have been finished. And therefore if the sixth vial has not already begun to be poured out, it may well be speedily expected.

But with regard to the first thing that I have supposed to be signified by the effect of this vial, viz. The drying up the fountains and streams of the wealth and temporal incomes and supplies of the Antichristian church and territories, I would propose it to consideration, whether or no many things that have come to pass within these twenty years past, may not be looked upon as probable beginnings of a fulfilment of this prophecy. Particularly what the kings of Spain and Portugal did some years since, when displeased with the Pope, forbidding any thenceforward going to Rome for investitures, &c. thereby cutting off two great streams of the Pope's wealth, from so great and rich a part of the Popish world; and its becoming so frequent a thing of late for Popish princes, in their wars, to make bold with the treasure of the church, and to tax the clergy within their dominions, as well as laity; or, which is equivalent, to oblige them to contribute great sums, under the name of a free gift; and also the late peeling and impoverishing the Pope's temporal dominions in Italy, by the armies of the Austrians, Neapolitans and Spaniards, passing and repassing through them, and living so much at discretion in them, of which the Pope has so loudly complained, and in vain; receiving nothing but menaces, when he has objected against giving liberty for the like passage for the future. These things make it hopeful that the time is coming when the princes of Europe, the ten horns, shall hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh; as Rev. xvii. 16, which will prepare the way for what next follows, her being burnt with fire; even as the sixth vial poured out, to consume the supplies of Antichrist, and strip him naked of his wealth, and as it were to pick his flesh off from his

bones, will make way for what next follows, the seventh vial, that will consume Antichrist by the fierceness of God's wrath.

Besides these things that have been already mentioned, are also worthy to be considered the things that have lately happened to dry up the fountains and streams of the wealth of the Antichristian dominions: As, the so far ruining the trade of France and Spain, that are the two chief Popish kingdoms, the main support of the Popish cause, and from whence the kingdom of Antichrist has had of late its main supplies. The almost miraculous taking of Cape Breton, in the year 1745, whereby was dried up one of the main sources of the wealth of the kingdom of France; and the no less, but yet more wonderful disappointment of the French, in their great attempt to repossess themselves of it, and the confounding of their great Armada, under the duke D'Anville, by a most visible hand of God against them, the last year; and in now again baffling a second attempt of our obstinate enemies, this year, by delivering up their men of war, with their warlike forces and stores, in their way to America, into the hands of the English Admirals, Anson and Warren: The strange and unaccountable consuming of the great magazines of the French Eastindia company, at Port L'Orient, with their magnificent buildings, the last year; and its so wonderfully coming to pass, that scarce any thing of the great stores there laid up, was saved out of the flames; the awful destruction, by an earthquake, the last year, of that great and rich city of Lima, the centre of the South sea trade, and the capital of Peru, the richest country in the world, from whence comes more of its silver and gold than any other country, from whence Spain is principally supplied with its wealth, and where the French had a great trade; the destruction of the city being attended with the destruction of all the ships in the harbor, which were dashed in pieces as it were in a moment, by the immediate hand of God; many of which were doubtless laden with vast treasures. I might have mentioned the taking of Porto Bello, not long before this, by a very small force, though a place of very great strength, where the Spanish galleons used principally

to go, to carry the wealth of Peru to Spain. Besides the taking from the French and Spaniards so many of their ships, laden with vast riches, trading to the south seas, the East and Westindies, and the Levant.

And here it is especially worthy of notice, that when the French seemed to have gotten so great an advantage of the English factory at Madrass, they were so frustrated of the benefit and gains they expected by it, by the hand of heaven against them, immediately pursueing the conquerors with tempest, wrecking their ships laden with our spoils; and after that, delivering up into the hands of the English their East-india fleet, with their stores and immense treasures, intended for the confirming to themselves the advantage they seemed to have gained by the forementioned conquest: At the same instant, also delivering into our hands their strong force intended for the regaining that great fountain of their wealth, which they had lost at Cape Breton. And since that, delivering into the hands of Sir Peter Warren so great a part of their vast and rich fleet from the Westindies.

And one thing with relation to the taking of Cape Breton, though it may seem trivial, yet I do not think to be altogether inconsiderable in the present case; and that is, that hereby the Antichristian dominions are deprived of a very great part of their fish, which makes no small part of the food and support of Popish countries; their superstition forbidding them to eat any flesh for near a third part of the year. This they were supplied with much more from Cape Breton, than any place in the world in the possession of Papists. And the contention of France with the Dutch, deprives them of most of their supply of this sort, which they had elsewhere. When the prophet Isaiah foretells the depriving Egypt of its wealth and temporal supplies, under the figure of drying up their rivers, this is particularly mentioned, that they should be deprived of their fish. Isa. xix. 4, &c. "And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel Lord. And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the rivers shall be wasted and dried up; and they shall turn the rivers far away, and the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up. The fishers also

shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish." This is expressed in the prophecies of drying up the waters, i. e. the supplies of Egypt; and this probably is implied in the prophecies of drying up the waters of that city that is spiritually called Egypt. And it may be noted, that this is not only a supply that the church of Antichrist has literally out of the waters, but is that part of their temporal supply which is eminently the supply and food of their Antichristian superstition, or which their Popish religion makes necessary for them.

These things duly considered, I imagine afford us ground to suppose, not only that the effect of this sixth vial is already begun, but that some progress is already made in it, and that this vial is now running apace. And when it shall be finished, there is all reason to suppose that the destruction of Antichrist will very speedily follow; and that the two last vials will succeed one another more closely than the other vials. When once the river Euphrates was dried up, and Cyrus's way was prepared, he delayed not, but immediately entered into the city to destroy it. Nor is it God's manner, when once his way is prepared, to delay to deliver his church and shew mercy to Zion. When once impediments are removed, Christ will no longer remain at a distance, but will be like a roe or a young hart, coming swiftly to the help of his people. When that cry is made, Isa. lvii. 14. "Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, &c. The high and lofty one that inhabits eternity, is represented as very near to revive the spirit of the contrite, and deliver his people with whom he had been wroth," Ver. 15, to the end. When that cry is made Isa. xl. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert an highway for our God; every valley shall be exalted," &c. God tells his church, *that her warfare is accomplished, and the time to comfort her is come, and that the glory of the Lord now shall be revealed, and all flesh see it together*, ver. 1.....5. And agreeably to these things, Christ, on the pouring out the sixth vial, says, *Behold I come*, Rev. xvi. 15. The sixth vial is the forerunner of the seventh and last, to prepare its way,

The angel that pours out this vial is the harbinger of Christ; and when the harbinger is come, the king is at hand. John the Baptist, that was Christ's harbinger, who came to level mountains and fill up valleys, proclaimed, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand; and when he had prepared Christ's way, then the Lord suddenly came into his temple, even the messenger of the covenant*, Mal. iii. 1.

It is true, that we do not know how long this vial may continue running, and so Christ's way preparing, before it is fully prepared: But yet if there be reason to think the effect of this vial is begun, or is near, then there is reason also to think that the beginning of that great work of God's spirit, in reviving of religion, which, before it is finished, will issue in Antichrist's ruin, is not far off. For it is pretty manifest, that the beginning of this work will accompany the sixth vial. For the gathering together of the armies on both sides, on the side of Christ and Antichrist, to that great battle that shall issue in the overthrow of the latter, will be under this vial; (compare Rev. xvi. 12, 13, 14, with chapter xix. 11, to the end) And it is plain that Christ's manifesting himself, and wonderfully appearing after long hiding himself to plead his own and his people's cause, and riding forth against his enemies in a glorious manner, and his people's following him in pure linen, or the practice of righteousness and pure religion, will be the thing that will give the alarm to Antichrist, and cause him to gather that vast host to make the utmost opposition. But this alarm and gathering together is represented as being under the sixth vial. So that it will be a great revival, and mighty progress of true religion under the sixth vial, eminently threatening the speedy and utter overthrow of Satan's kingdom on earth, that will so mightily rouse the old serpent, to exert himself with such exceeding violence, in that greatest conflict and struggle that ever he had with Christ and the Church, since the world stood.

All the seven vials bring terrible judgments upon Antichrist; but there seems to be something distinguishing of the three last, the fifth, sixth and seventh, viz. That they more directly tend to the overthrow of his kingdom, and accordingly

each of them is attended with a great reviving of religion. The fifth vial was attended with such a revival, and reformation, that greatly weakened and diminished the throne or kingdom of the beast, and went far towards its ruin. It seems as though the sixth vial should be much more so; for it is the distinguishing note of this vial, that it is the preparatory vial, which more than any other vial prepares the way for Christ's coming to destroy the kingdom of Antichrist, and set up his own kingdom in the world. A great outpouring of the Spirit accompanied that dispensation that was preparatory to Christ's coming in his public ministry, in the days of his flesh: So, much more, will a great outpouring of the Spirit accompany the dispensation that will be preparatory to Christ's coming in his kingdom.

And besides those things which belong to the preparation of Christ's way, which are so often represented by levelling mountains, drying up rivers, &c. viz. The unravelling intricacies, and removing difficulties attending Christian doctrines, the distinguishing between true religion and its false appearances, the detecting and exploding errors and corrupt principles, and the reforming the wicked lives of professors, which have been the chief stumbling blocks and obstacles that have hitherto hindered the progress of true religion; I say, these things, which seem to belong to this preparatory vial, are the proper work of the Spirit of God, promoting and advancing divine light and true piety, and can be the effect of nothing else.

And that the beginning of that glorious work of God's Spirit, which shall finally bring on the church's latter day glory, will accompany that other effect of this vial, viz. The turning the streams of the wealth of the world, the bringing its treasures, and the gains of its trade and navigation, into the true Protestant church of Christ, seems very manifest, because this very effect is spoken of as that which shall be at the beginning of this glorious work. Isa. lx. 8, 9. "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows? Surely the Isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish *first*, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the holy one of Israel,

because he hath glorified thee." So that it is to be hoped that before this effect of this vial, which is now probably begun, is at an end, the Spirit of God will so influence the hearts of Protestants, that they will be disposed to devote to the service of God the silver and gold they take from their Popish enemies, and the gains of their trade and navigation, both to the East and Westindies, so that their merchandise and hire shall be holiness to the Lord.

Agreeably to what has been supposed, that an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit of God is to accompany this sixth vial; so the beginning of a work of extraordinary awakening has already attended the probable beginning of this vial; and has been continued in one place or other, for many years past; although it has been, in some places, mingled with much enthusiasm, after the manner of things in their first beginnings, unripe, and mixed with much crudity. But it is to be hoped a far more pure, extensive and glorious revival of religion is not far off, which will more properly be the beginning of that work, which in its issue shall overthrow the kingdom of Antichrist, and of Satan through the world. But God will be inquired of for this, by the house of Israel, to do it for them.

Ans. 5. If notwithstanding all that I have said, it be still judged that there is sufficient reason to determine that the ruin of Antichrist is at a very great distance, and if all that I have said, as arguing that there is reason to hope that the beginning of that glorious revival of religion, which in its continuance and progress will destroy the kingdom of Antichrist is not very far off, be judged to be of no force; yet it will not follow that our complying with what is proposed to us in the late memorial from Scotland, will be in vain, or not followed with such spiritual blessings, as will richly recompense the pains of such extaordinary prayer for the Holy Spirit, and the revival of religion. If God does not grant that greatest of all effusions of his Spirit, so soon as we desire, yet we shall have the satisfaction of a consciousness of our having employed ourselves in a manner that is certainly agreeable to Christ's will and frequent commands, in being much in prayer for this mercy, and much more in it than has heretofore been com-

mon with Christians: And there will be all reason to hope, that we shall receive some blessed token of his acceptance. If the fall of mystical Babylon, and the work of God's Spirit that shall bring it to pass, be at several hundred years distance, yet it follows not that there will be no happy revivals of religion before that time, that shall be richly worth the most diligent, earnest and constant praying for.

I would say something to one Objection more, and then hasten to the conclusion of this discourse.

Object. VI. Some may be ready to object, That what is proposed in this memorial is a new thing, such as never was put in practice in the church of God before.

Ans. If there be something circumstantially new in it, this cannot be a sufficient objection. The duty of prayer is no new duty: For many of God's people expressly to agree, as touching something they shall ask in prayer, is no new thing: For God's people to agree on circumstances of time and place for united prayer, according to their own discretion is no new thing: For many, in different places, to agree to offer up extraordinary prayers to God, at the same time, as a token of their union, is no new thing; but has been commonly practiced in the appointment of days of fasting and prayer for special mercies. And if the people of God should engage in the duty of prayer, for the coming of Christ's kingdom, in a new manner in that respect, that they resolve they will not be so negligent of this duty, as has been common with professors of religion heretofore, but will be more frequent and fervent in it; this would be such a new thing as ought to be, and would be only to reform a former negligence. And for the people of God in various parts of the world, visibly, and by express agreement, to unite for this extraordinary prayer, is no more than their duty, and no more than what it is foretold the people of God should actually do, before the time comes of the church's promised glory on earth. And if this be a duty, then it is a duty to come into some method to render this practicable: But it is not practicable (as was shewn before) but by this method, or some other equivalent.

THE CONCLUSION.

AND now, upon the whole, I desire every serious Christian, that may read this discourse, calmly and deliberately to consider whether he can excuse himself from complying with what has been proposed to us and requested of us, by those ministers of Christ in Scotland, that are the authors of the late memorial. God has stirred up a part of his church, in a distant part of the world, to be in an extraordinary manner seeking and crying to him, that he would appear to favor Zion, as he has promised. And they are applying themselves to us, to join with them ; and make that very proposal to us, that is spoken of in my text, and in like manner and circumstances. The members of one church, in one country, are coming to others, in other distant countries, saying, " Let us go speedily and constantly to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts." Will it not become us readily to say " I will go also" ? What these servants of Christ ask of us, is not silver or gold, or any of our outward substance, or that we would put ourselves to any cost, or do any thing that will be likely to expose us to any remarkable trouble, difficulty or suffering in our outward interest ; but only that we would help together with them, by our prayers to God, for the greatest mercy in the world ; and that a mercy which as much concerns us as them ; for the glory of their Lord and ours, for the great advancement of our common interest and happiness, and the happiness of our fellow creatures through all nations ; a mercy, which, at this day especially, there is great need of ; a mercy, which, we in this land do stand in particular need of ; a mercy which the word of God requires us to make the subject matter of our prayers, above all other mercies, and gives us more encouragement to pray earnestly and unitedly to him for, than any other mercy ; and a mercy, which the providence of God towards the world of mankind, at this day, does loudly call the people of God to pray for. I think, we cannot reasonably doubt but that these ministers have acted a part becoming disciples of the great Messiah,

and ministers of his kingdom, and have done the will of God, according to his word, in setting forward such an affair at this day, and in proposing it to us. And therefore I desire it may be considered, whether we shall not really sin against God, in refusing to comply with their proposal and request, or in neglecting it, and turning it by, with but little notice and attention; therein disregarding that which is truly a call of God to us.

The ministers that make this proposal to us are no Separatists or schismatics, promoters of no public disorders, nor of any wildness or extravagance in matters of religion; but are quiet and peaceable members and ministers of the church of Scotland, that have lamented the late divisions and breaches of that church. If any shall say, that they are under no advantage to judge of their character, but must take it on trust from others, because they conceal their names; in answer to this, I would say, that I presume that no sober person will say that he has any reason to suspect them, to be any other than gentlemen of honest intention. Be sure there is no appearance of any thing else, but an upright design in their proposal: And that they have not mentioned their names, is an argument of it. It may well be presumed, from the manner of their expressing themselves, in the memorial itself, that they concealed their names from that, which perhaps may be called an excess of modesty; choosing to be at the greatest distance from appearing to set forth themselves to the view of the world, as the heads of a great affair, and the first projectors and movers of something extraordinary, that they desire should become general, and that God's people in various distant parts of the world should agree in. And therefore, they are moreover careful to tell us, that they do not propose the affair, as now setting it on foot, but as a thing already set on foot; and do not tell us who first projected and moved it. The proposal is made to us in a very proper and prudent manner, with all appearance of Christian modesty and sincerity, and with a very prudent guard against any thing that looks like superstition, or whatsoever might entangle a tender conscience; and far from any appearance of a design to promote

any particular party or denomination of Christians, in opposition to others; but with all appearance of the contrary, in their charitable request, that none would by any means conceive of any such thing to be in their view, and that all, of all denominations, and opinions concerning the late religious commotions, would join with them, in seeking the common interest of the kingdom of Christ. And therefore I think, none can be in the way of their duty, in neglecting a proposal in itself excellent, and that which they have reason to think is made with upright intentions, merely because the proposers modestly conceal their names. I do not see how any serious person, that has an ill opinion of late religious stirs, can have any color of reason to refuse a compliance with this proposal, on that account: The more disorders, extravagancies and delusions of the devil have lately prevailed, the more need have we to pray earnestly to God, for his Holy Spirit to promote true religion, in opposition to the grand deceiver, and all his works; and the more such prayer as is proposed, is answered, the more effectually will all that is contrary to sober and pure religion, be extirpated and exploded.

One would think that every one that favors the dust of Zion, when he hears that God is stirring up a considerable number of his ministers and people, to unite in extraordinary prayer, for the revival of religion and advancement of his Kingdom, should greatly rejoice on this occasion. If we lay to heart the present calamities of the church of Christ, and long for that blessed alteration that God has promised, one would think it should be natural to rejoice at the appearance of something in so dark a day, that is so promising a token. Would not our friends that were lately in captivity at Canada, that earnestly longed for deliverance, have rejoiced to have heard of any thing that seemed to forebode the approach of their redemption? And particularly may we not suppose that such of them as were religious persons, would greatly have rejoiced to have understood that there was stirred up in God's people an extraordinary spirit of prayer for their redemption? And I do not know why it would not be as natural for us to rejoice at the like hopeful token of the redemption of Zion,

if we made her interest our own, and preferred Jerusalem above our chief joy.

If we are indeed called of God to comply with the proposal now made to us, then let me beseech all that do sincerely love the interest of real Christianity, notwithstanding any diversity of opinion, and former disputes, now to unite in this affair, with one heart and voice: And let us go speedily to pray before the Lord. There is no need that one should wait for another. If we can get others, that are our neighbors, to join with us, and so can conveniently spend the quarterly seasons with praying societies, this is desirable; but if not, why should we wholly neglect the duty proposed? Why should not we perform it by ourselves, uniting in heart and practice, as far as we are able, with those who, in distant places, are engaged in that duty at that time?

If it be agreeable to the mind and will of God, that we should comply with the memorial, by praying for the coming of Christ's kingdom, in the manner therein proposed, then doubtless it is the duty of all to comply with the memorial, in that respect also, viz. in endeavoring, as far as in us lies, to promote others' joining in such prayer, and to render this union and agreement as extensive as may be. Private Christians may have many advantages and opportunities for this; but especially ministers, inasmuch as they not only are by office overseers of whole congregations of God's people, and their guides, in matters of religion, but ordinarily have a far more extensive acquaintance and influence abroad, than private Christians in common have.

And I hope that such as are convinced that it is their duty to comply with, and encourage this design, will remember that we ought not only to go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek this mercy, but also to go constantly. We should unite in our practice those two things, which our Saviour unites in his precept, *praying* and *not fainting*. If we should continue some years, and nothing remarkable in Providence should appear, as though God heard and answered, we should act very unbecoming believers, if we should therefore begin to be disheartened, and grow dull and slack, in our seeking of

God so great a mercy. It is very apparent from the word of God, that God is wont often to try the faith and patience of his people, when crying to him for some great and important mercy, by withholding the mercy sought, for a season, and not only so, but at first to cause an increase of dark appearances; and yet, without fail, at last, to succeed those who continue instant in prayer with all perseverance, and will not let God go except he blesses. It is now proposed that this extraordinary united prayer should continue for seven years, from November, 1746. Perhaps some that appear forward to engage, may begin to think the time long, before the seven years are out; and may account it a dull story, to go on, for so long a time, praying in this extraordinary method, while all yet continues dark and dead, without any dawnings of the wished for light, or new promising appearance in Providence of the near approach of the desired mercy. But let it be considered, whether it will not be a poor business, if our faith and patience is so short winded, that we cannot be willing to wait upon God one seven years, in a way of taking this little pains, in seeking a mercy so infinitely vast. For my part, I sincerely wish and hope that there may not be an end of extraordinary united prayer, among God's people, for the effusions of the blessed Spirit, when the seven years are ended; but that it will be continued, either in this method, or some other, by a new agreement, that will be entered into, with greater engagedness, and more abundant alacrity, than this is; and that extraordinary united prayer for such a mercy will be further propagated and extended, than it can be expected to be in one seven years. But yet at the same time I hope God's people, that unite in this agreement, will see some tokens for good, before these seven years are out, that shall give them to see, that God has not said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain; and shall serve greatly to animate and encourage them to go on in united prayers for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, with increasing fervency. But whatever our hopes may be in this respect, we must be content to be ignorant of the times and seasons, which the father hath put in his own power; and must be willing that

God should answer prayer, and fulfil his own glorious promises, in his own time; remembering such instructions, counsels and promises of the word of God as these, Psal. xxvii. 14. "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait I say on the Lord." Hab. ii. 3, 4. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but in the end it shall speak and not lie: Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Mich. vii. 7. "I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation: My God will hear me." Isa. xxv. 8, 9. "God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God! We have waited for him, and he will save us: This is Jehovah! We have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." AMEN.

AN

ACCOUNT

OF THE

L I F E

OF THE REVEREND

DAVID BRAINERD,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL; MISSIONARY TO THE INDIANS FROM THE HONORABLE SOCIETY, IN SCOTLAND, FOR THE PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE; AND PASTOR OF A CHURCH OF CHRISTIAN INDIANS IN NEWJERSEY.

Who died at Northampton, *in Newengland, October 9th,* 1747, *in the 30th year of his age.*

CHIEFLY TAKEN FROM HIS OWN DIARY, AND OTHER PRIVATE WRITINGS, WRITTEN FOR HIS OWN USE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE particular account, given in this book, of Mr. BRAINERD, save that part which relates to his last exercises and his death, we have been constrained to omit. This omission is not only a matter of necessity, as we had not room for the entire account, but we think of propriety, as it consists almost wholly of extracts from Mr. BRAINERD's Diary, and in his own words. A few brief remarks are indeed interspersed by Mr. EDWARDS, to connect the extracts, and give the whole the cast of a continued Narrative. But the account taken at large is too much of a mere compilation to be numbered properly among his works. It will not be possible we confess to feel the pertinency and weight of the Reflections which Mr. EDWARDS has made on these memoirs, so sensibly as if they had been just read, as in fact they are supposed to have been. But if the reader will consider what we have inserted, as a specimen of Mr. BRAINERD's views, exercises and efforts, as a Christian, a Preacher and a Missionary, as detailed through more than two hundred preceding pages, he will not be badly prepared to peruse the Reflections.

CLOSING SCENE OF THE LIFE

OF THE

REV. DAVID BRAINERD.

MR. BRAINERD, before he left Boston, had occasion to bear a very full, plain, and open testimony against that opinion, that the essence of saving faith lies in believing that Christ died for me in particular, and that this is the first act of faith in a true believer's closing with Christ.... He did it in a long conference he had with a gentleman, that has very publicly and strenuously appeared to defend that tenet. He had this discourse with him in the presence of a number of considerable persons, who came to visit Mr. Brainerd before he left the town, and to take their leave of him. In which debate he made this plain declaration, at the same time confirming what he said by many arguments, that the essence of saving faith was wholly left out of that definition of saving faith which that gentleman has published; and that the faith which he had defined, had nothing of God in it, nothing above nature, nor indeed above the power of the devils; and that all such as had this faith, and had no better, though they might have this to never so high a degree, would surely perish..... And he declared also, that he never had greater assurance of the falseness of the principles of those that maintained such a faith, and of their dangerous and destructive tendency, or a more affecting sense of the great delusion and misery of those that depended on getting to heaven by such a faith, while they had no better, than he lately had when he was supposed to be at the point to die, and expected every minute to pass into eternity Mr. Brainerd's discourse at this time, and the forcible reasonings by which he confirmed what he asserted, appeared to be greatly to the satisfaction of those present; as

several of them took occasion expressly to manifest to him, before they took leave of him.

When this conversation was ended, having bid an affectionate farewell to his friends, he set out in the cool of the afternoon, on his journey to Northampton, attended by his brother, and my daughter that went with him to Boston; and would have been accompanied out of the town by a number of gentlemen, besides that honorable person who gave him his company for some miles on that occasion, as a testimony of their esteem and respect, had not his aversion to any thing of pomp and shew prevented it.

Saturday, July 25.....I arrived here at Northampton; having set out from Boston on Monday, about four o'clock, P. M. In this journey, I rode about sixteen miles a day, one day with another. I was sometimes extremely tired and faint on the road, so that it seemed impossible for me to proceed any further. At other times I was considerably better, and felt some freedom both of body and mind.

Lord's day, July 26.....This day I saw clearly, that I should never be happy; yea, that God himself could not make me happy, unless I could be in a capacity to please and glorify him forever: Take away this, and admit me into all the fine heavens that can be conceived of by men or angels, and I should still be miserable forever.

Though he had so far revived, as to be able to travel thus far, yet he manifested no expectation of recovery: He supposed, as his physician did, that his being brought so near to death at Boston, was owing to the breaking of ulcers in his lungs: He told me, that he had had several such ill turns before, only not to so high a degree, but as he supposed, owing to the same cause, viz. the breaking of ulcers; and that he was brought lower and lower every time; and it appeared to him, that in his last sickness, in Boston, he was brought as low as it was possible and yet live; and that he had not the least expectation of surviving the next return of this breaking of ulcers: But still appeared perfectly calm in the prospect of death.

On Wednesday morning, the week after he came to Northampton, he took leave of his brother Israel, as never expect-

ing to see him again in this world; he now setting out from hence on his journey to Newhaven.

When Mr. Brainerd came hither, he had so much strength as to be able, from day to day, to ride out two or three miles, and to return; and sometimes to pray in the family; but from this time he gradually, but sensibly, decayed, and became weaker and weaker.

While he was here, his conversation from first to last was much on the same subjects as it had been when in Boston: He was much in speaking of the nature of true religion of heart and practice, as distinguished from its various counterfeits; expressing his great concern, that the latter did so much prevail in many places. He often manifested his great abhorrence of all such doctrines and principles in religion, as in any wise savored of, and had any, though but a remote tendency to Antinomianism; of all such notions, as seemed to diminish the necessity of holiness of life, or to abate men's regard to the commands of God, and a strict, diligent, and universal practice of virtue and piety, under a pretence of depreciating our works, and magnifying God's free grace. He spake often, with much detestation, of such experiences and pretended discoveries and joys, as have nothing of the nature of sanctification in them, and do not tend to strictness, tenderness, and diligence in religion, and meekness and benevolence towards mankind, and an humble behavior: And he also declared, that he looked on such pretended humility as worthy of no regard, that was not manifested by modesty of conduct and conversation. He spake often, with abhorrence, of the spirit and practice that appears among the greater part of separatists at this day in the land, particularly those in the eastern parts of Connecticut; in their condemning and separating from the standing ministry and churches, their crying down learning, and a learned ministry, their notion of an immediate call to the work of the ministry, and the forwardness of laymen to set up themselves as public teachers. He had been much conversant in the eastern part of Connecticut, his native place being near to it, when the same principles, notions and spirit, began to operate, which have since

prevailed to a greater height; and had acquaintance with some of those persons who are become heads and leaders of the separatists; he had also been conversant with persons of the same way elsewhere: And I heard him say, once and again, he knew by his acquaintance with this sort of people, that what was chiefly and most generally in repute among them as the power of godliness, was an entirely different thing from that true vital piety recommended in the scriptures, and had nothing in it of that nature. He manifested a great dislike of a disposition in persons to much noise and show in religion, and affecting to be abundant in proclaiming and publishing their own experiences: Though at the same time he did not condemn, but approved of Christians' speaking of their own experiences on some occasions, and to some persons, with due modesty and discretion.

After he came hither, as long as he lived, he was much in speaking of that future prosperity of Zion, that is so often foretold and promised in the scripture: It was a theme he delighted to dwell upon; and his mind seemed to be carried forth with earnest concern about it, and intense desires, that religion might speedily and abundantly revive and flourish; though he had not the least expectation of recovery; yea, the nearer death advanced, and the more the symptoms of its approach increased, still the more did his mind seem to be taken up with this subject. He told me, when near his end, that "he never in all his life, had his mind so led forth in desires and earnest prayers for the flourishing of Christ's kingdom on earth, as since he was brought so exceeding low at Boston." He seemed much to wonder, that there appeared no more of a disposition in ministers and people to pray for the flourishing of religion through the world; that so little a part of their prayers was generally taken up about it in their families, and elsewhere; and particularly, he several times expressed his wonder, that there appeared no more forwardness to comply with the proposal lately made, in a memorial from a number of ministers in Scotland, and sent over into America, for united, extraordinary prayer, among Christ's ministers and people, for the coming of Christ's kingdom: And he sent it as

his dying advice to his own congregation that they should practice agreeably to that proposal.*

Though he was constantly exceeding weak, yet there appeared in him a continual care well to improve time, and fill it up with something that might be profitable, and in some respect for the glory of God or the good of men; either profitable conversation, or writing letters to absent friends, or noting something in his Diary, or looking over his former writings, correcting them, and preparing them to be left in the hands of others at his death, or giving some directions concerning a future conducting and management of his people, or employment in secret devotions. He seemed never to be easy, however ill, if he was not doing something for God, or in his service.

After he came hither, he wrote a preface to a Diary of the famous Mr. Shepard's, having been much urged to it by those gentlemen in Boston, who had the care of the publication: Which Diary, with his preface, has since been published.

In his Diary for Lord's Day, August 9, he speaks of longing desires after death, through a sense of the excellency of a state of perfection.

In his Diary for Lord's Day, August 16, he speaks of his having so much refreshment of soul in the house of God, that it seemed to refresh his body. And this is not only noted in his Diary, but was very observable to others; it was very apparent, not only, that his mind was exhilarated with inward consolation, but also that his animal spirits and bodily strength seemed to be remarkably restored, as though he had forgot his illness. But this was the last time that ever he attended public worship on the Sabbath.

On Tuesday morning that week, I being absent on a journey, he prayed with my family; but not without much diffi-

* His congregation, since this, have with great cheerfulness and unanimity fallen in with this advice, and have practised agreeably to the proposal from Scotland; and have at times, appeared with uncommon engagedness and fervency of spirit in their meetings and united devotions, pursuant to that proposal: Also the Presbyteries of Newyork, and Newbrunswick, since this, have with one consent, fallen in with the proposal, as likewise some others of God's people in those parts.

culty, for want of bodily strength: And this was the last family prayer that ever he made.

He had been wont, until now, frequently to ride out, two or three miles: But this week, on Thursday, was the last time he ever did so.

Lord's Day August 23.—This morning I was considerably refreshed with the thought, yea, the hope and expectation of the enlargement of Christ's kingdom; and I could not but hope, the time was at hand, when Babylon the great would fall, and rise no more: This led me to some spiritual meditations, that were very refreshing to me. I was unable to attend public worship either part of the day; but God was pleased to afford me fixedness and satisfaction in divine thoughts. Nothing so refreshes my soul, as when I can go to God, yea, to God *my exceeding joy*. When he is so, sensibly, to my soul, O, how unspeakably delightful is this!

In the week past I had divers turns of inward refreshing; though my body was inexpressibly weak, followed continually with agues and fevers. Sometimes my soul centered in God, as my only portion; and I felt that I should be forever unhappy, if he did not reign: I saw the sweetness and happiness of being his subject, at his disposal: This made all my difficulties quickly vanish.

From this Lord's Day, viz. August 23, I was troubled very much with vapoury disorders, and could neither write nor read, and could scarcely live; although, through mercy, was not so much oppressed with heavy melancholy and gloominess, as at many other times.

Until this week he had been wont to lodge in a room above stairs; but he now grew so weak, that he was no longer able to go up stairs and down; Friday August 28, was the last time he ever went above stairs; henceforward he betook himself to a lower room.

On Wednesday, September 2, being the day of our public lecture, he seemed to be refreshed with seeing the neighboring ministers that came hither to the lecture, and expressed a great desire once more to go to the house of God on that day: And accordingly rode to the meeting, and attended di-

vine service while the Rev. Mr. Woodbridge of Hatfield preached. He signified that he supposed it to be the last time that ever he should attend the public worship; as it proved. And indeed it was the last time that ever he went out at our gate alive.

On the Saturday evening next following, he was unexpectedly visited by his brother, Mr. John Brainerd, who came to see him from Newjersey. He was much refreshed by this unexpected visit, this brother being peculiarly dear to him; and he seemed to rejoice in a devout and solemn manner, to see him, and to hear the comfortable tidings he brought concerning the state of his dear congregation of Christian Indians: And a circumstance of this visit, that he was exceeding glad of, was, that his brother brought him some of his private writings from Newjersey, and particularly his Diary that he had kept for many years past.

Lord's Day, September 6.....I began to read some of my private writings, which my brother brought me; and was considerably refreshed, with what I met with in them.

Monday, September 7.....I proceeded farther in reading my old private writings, and found they had the same effect upon me as before: I could not but rejoice and bless God for what passed long ago, which without writing had been entirely lost.

This evening, when I was in great distress of body, my soul longed that God should be glorified: I saw there was no heaven but this. I could not but speak to the bystanders then of the only happiness, viz. pleasing God. O that I could forever live to God! The day I trust, is at hand, the perfect day: O, the day of deliverance from all sin!

Lord's Day, September 13.....I was much refreshed and engaged in meditation and writing, and found a heart to act for God. My spirits were refreshed, and my soul delighted to do something for God.

On the evening following that Lord's Day, his feet began to appear sensiby swelled; which thenceforward swelled more and more; a symptom of his dissolution coming on.

The next day, his brother John left him, being obliged to return to Newjersey on some business of great importance and necessity ; intending to return again with all possible speed, hoping to see his brother yet once more in the land of the living.

On the Thursday of this week, September 17, was the last time that ever he went out of his lodging room. That day, he was again visited by his brother Israel, who continued with him thenceforward until his death. On that evening, he was taken with something of a diarrhœa ; which he looked upon as another sign of his approaching death : Whereupon he expressed himself thus ; O, the glorious time is now coming ! I have longed to serve God perfectly : Now God will gratify those desires ! And from time to time, at the several steps and new symptoms of the sensible approach of his dissolution, he was so far from being sunk or damped, that he seemed to be animated, and made more cheerful ; as being glad at the appearances of death's approach. He often used the epithet, glorious, when speaking of the day of his death, calling it that glorious day. And as he saw his dissolution gradually approaching, he was much in talking about it, with perfect calmness speaking of a future state ; and also settling all his affairs, very particularly and minutely, giving directions concerning what he would have done in one respect and another after he was dead. And the nearer death approached, the more desirous he seemed to be of it. He several times spake of the different kinds of willingness to die ; and spoke of it as an ignoble, mean kind of willingness to die, to be willing to leave the body, only to get rid of pain ; or to go to heaven only to get honor and advancement there.

Saturday, September 19....Near night, while I attempted to walk a little, my thoughts turned thus : How infinitely sweet it is, to love God, and be all for him ! Upon which it was suggested to me, You are not an angel, not lively and active. To which my whole soul immediately replied, I as sincerely desire to love and glorify God, as any angel in heaven. Upon which it was suggested again, But you are filthy, not fit for heaven. Hereupon instantly appeared the blessed

robes of Christ's righteousness, which I could not but exult and triumph in; and I viewed the infinite excellency of God, and my soul even broke with longings, that God should be glorified. I thought of dignity in heaven; but instantly the thought returned, I do not go to heaven to get honor, but to give all possible glory and praise. O, how I longed that God should be glorified on earth also! O, I was made for eternity, if God might be glorified! Bodily pains I cared not for: Though I was then in extremity, I never felt easier; I felt willing to glorify God in that state of bodily distress, as long as he pleased I should continue in it. The grave appeared really sweet, and I longed to lodge my weary bones in it: But O that God might be glorified! This was the burden of all my cry. O, I knew I should be active as an angel, in heaven; and that I should be stripped of my filthy garments! So that there was no objection. But O, to love and praise God more, to please him forever! This my soul panted after, and even now pants for while I write. O that God might be glorified in the whole earth. Lord, let *thy kingdom come*. I longed for a spirit of preaching to descend and rest on ministers, that they might address the consciences of men with closeness and power. I saw God had the residue of the spirit; and my soul longed it should be poured from on high. I could not but plead with God for my dear congregation, that he would preserve it and not suffer his great name to lose its glory in that work: My soul still longing, that God might be glorified.

The extraordinary frame that he was in, that evening, could not be hid; *his mouth spake out of the abundance of his heart*, expressing in a very affecting manner much the same things as are written in his Diary: And among very many other extraordinary expressions, which he then uttered, were such as these; my heaven is to please God, and to glorify him, and give all to him, and to be wholly devoted to his glory; that is the heaven I long for; that is my religion, and that is my happiness; and always was, ever since I suppose I had any true religion; and all those that are of that religion, shall meet me in heaven. I do not go to heaven to be advanced, but to

give honor to God. It is no matter where I shall be stationed in heaven, whether I have a high or a low seat there; but to love and please and glorify God is all: Had I a thousand souls, if they were worth any thing, I would give them all to God; but I have nothing to give, when all is done. It is impossible for any rational creature to be happy without acting all for God: God himself could not make him happy any other way. I long to be in heaven, praising and glorifying God with the holy angels: All my desire is to glorify God. My heart goes out to the burying place; it seems to me a desirable place: But O to glorify God; that is it; that is above all. It is a great comfort to me, to think that I have done a little for God in the world: O! it is but a very small matter; yet I have done a little; and I lament it, that I have not done more for him. There is nothing in the world worth living for, but doing good, and finishing God's work, doing the work that Christ did. I see nothing else in the world, that can yield any satisfaction, besides living to God, pleasing him, and doing his whole will. My greatest joy and comfort has been, to do something for promoting the interest of religion, and the souls of particular persons: And now in my illness, while I am full of pain and distress from day to day, all the comfort I have, is in being able to do some little char, or small piece of work for God, either by something that I say, or by writing, or some other way.

He intermingled with these and other like expressions, many pathetical counsels to those that were about him; particularly to my children and servants. He applied himself to some of my younger children at this time; calling them to him, and speaking to them one by one; setting before them, in a very plain manner, the nature and essence of true piety, and its great importance and necessity; earnestly warning them not to rest in any thing short of that true and thorough change of heart, and a life devoted to God; counselling them not to be slack in the great business of religion, nor in the least to delay it; enforcing his counsels with this, that his words were the words of a dying man: Said he, I shall die here, and here I shall be buried, and here you will see my

grave, and do you remember what I have said to you. I am going into eternity: And it is sweet to me to think of eternity; the endlessness of it makes it sweet: But O, what shall I say to the eternity of the wicked! I cannot mention it, nor think of it: The thought is too dreadful. When you see my grave, then remember what I said to you while I was alive; then think with yourself, how that man that lies in that grave, counselled and warned me to prepare for death.

His body seemed to be marvellously strengthened, through the inward vigor and refreshment of his mind; so that, although before he was so weak that he could hardly utter a sentence, yet now he continued his most affecting and profitable discourse to us for more than an hour, with scarce any intermission; and said of it, when he had done, it was the last sermon that ever he should preach.

This extraordinary frame of mind continued the next day; of which he says in his Diary as follows.

Lord's Day, September 20.....Was still in a sweet and comfortable frame; and was again melted with desires that God might be glorified, and with longings to love and live to him. Longed for the influences of the Divine Spirit to descend on ministers, in a special manner. And O, I longed to be with God, to behold his glory, and to bow in his presence.

It appears by what is noted in his Diary, both of this day, and the evening preceding, that his mind at this time was much impressed with a sense of the importance of the work of the ministry, and the need of the grace of God, and his special spiritual assistance in this work: And it also appeared in what he expressed in conversation; particularly in his discourse to his brother Israel, who was then a member of Yale College at Newhaven, and had been prosecuting his studies and academical exercises there, to that end, that he might be fitted for the work of the ministry, and was now with him.*

* This young gentleman was an ingenious, serious, studious, and hopefully truly pious person: There appeared in him many qualities giving hope of his being a great blessing in his day. But it has pleased God, since the death of his brother, to take him away also. He died that winter, at Newhaven, on Jan. 6, 1747-8, of a nervous fever, after about a fortnight's illness.

He now, and from time to time, in this his dying state, recommended to his brother, a life of selfdenial, of weanedness from the world, and devotedness to God, and an earnest endeavor to obtain much of the grace of God's Spirit, and God's gracious influences on his heart; representing the great need which ministers stand in of them, and the unspeakable benefit of them from his own experience. Among many other expressions, he said thus: "When ministers feel these special gracious influences on their hearts, it wonderfully assists them to come at the consciences of men, and as it were to handle them with hands; whereas, without them, whatever reason and oratory we make use of, we do but make use of stumps instead of hands."

Monday, September 21.....I began to correct a little volume of my private writings: God, I believe, remarkably helped me in it; my strength was surprisingly lengthened out, and my thoughts quick and lively, and my soul refreshed, hoping it might be a work for God. O, how good, how sweet it is, to labor for God!

Tuesday, September 22.....Was again employed in reading and correcting, and had the same success, as the day before. I was exceeding weak; but it seemed to refresh my soul, thus to spend time.

Wednesday, September 23.....I finished my corrections of the little piece forementioned, and felt uncommonly peaceful: It seemed as if I had now done all my work in this world, and stood ready for my call to a better. As long as I see any thing to be done for God, life is worth having: But O, how vain and unworthy it is, to live for any lower end! This day I indited a letter, I think, of great importance, to the Rev. Mr. Byram in Newjersey: O that God would bless and succeed that letter, which was written for the benefit of his church![*] O that God would *purify the sons of Levi*, that his glory may be advanced! This night, I endured a dreadful turn, wherein my life was expected scarce an hour or min-

[*] It was concerning the qualifications of ministers, and the examination and licensing of candidates for the work of the ministry.

ute together. But blessed be God, I have enjoyed considerable sweetness in divine things, this week, both by night and day.

Thursday, September 24.....My strength began to fail exceedingly; which looked further as if I had done all my work: However, I had strength to fold and superscribe my letter..... About two I went to bed, being weak and much disordered, and lay in a burning fever until night, without any proper rest. In the evening I got up, having lain down in some of my clothes; but was in the greatest distress, that ever I endured, having an uncommon kind of hiccough; which either strangled me, or threw me into a straining to vomit; and at the same time was distressed with griping pains. O, the distress of this evening! I had little expectation of my living the night through, nor indeed had any about me: And I longed for the finishing moment! I was obliged to repair to bed by six o'clock; and through mercy enjoyed some rest; but was grievously distressed at turns with the hiccough. My soul breathed after God, while the watcher was with me: When shall I come to God, even to God, my exceeding joy? O for this blessed likeness!

Friday, September 25.....This day, I was unspeakably weak, and little better than speechless all the day: However, I was able to write a little, and felt comfortably in some part of the day. O, it refreshed my soul, to think of former things, of desires to glorify God, of the pleasures of living to him! O my dear God, I am speedily coming to thee, I hope! Hasten the day, O Lord, if it be thy blessed will: *O come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.* Amen.*

Saturday, September 26.....I felt the sweetness of divine things, this forenoon; and had the consolation of a consciousness that I was doing something for God.

Lord's Day, September 27.....This was a very comfortable day to my soul; I think, I awoke with God. I was enabled

* This was the last that ever he wrote in his Diary with his own hand: Though it is continued a little farther, in a broken manner; written by his brother Israel, but indited by his mouth in this his weak and dying state.

to lift up my soul to God, early this morning; and while I had little bodily strength, I found freedom to lift up my heart to God for myself and others. Afterwards, was pleased with the thoughts of speedily entering into the unseen world.

Early this morning, as one of the family came into the room, he expressed himself thus: I have had more pleasure this morning, than all the drunkards in the world enjoy; if it were all extracted! So much did he esteem the joy of faith above the pleasures of sin.

He felt, that morning, an unusual appetite to food, with which his mind seemed to be exhilarated, as looking on it a sign of the very near approach of death; and said upon it, I was born on a sabbathday; and I have reason to think I was new born on a sabbathday; and I hope I shall die on this sabbathday: I should look upon it as a favor, if it may be the will of God that it should be so: I long for the time. O, *why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?* I am very willing to part with all: I am willing to part with my dear brother John, and never to see him again, to go to be forever with the Lord.* O, when I go there, how will God's dear church on earth be upon my mind!

Afterwards, the same morning, being asked how he did, he answered, I am almost in eternity; I long to be there. My work is done; I have done with all my friends; all the world is nothing to me; I long to be in heaven, praising and glorifying God with the holy angels: All my desire is to glorify God.

During the whole of these last two weeks of his life he seemed to continue in this frame of heart, loose from all the world, as having done his work, and done with all things here below, having nothing to do but to die, and abiding in an earnest desire and expectation of the happy moment, when his soul should take its flight, and go to a state of perfection of ho-

* He had, before this, expressed a desire, if it might be the will of God, to live until his brother returned from Newjersey: Who when he went away, intended, if possible, to perform his journey and return in a fortnight; hoping once more to meet his brother in the land of the living. The fortnight was now near expired, it ended the next day.

liness and perfect glorifying and enjoying God, manifested in a variety of expressions. He said, that the consideration of the day of death, and the day of judgment, had a long time been peculiarly sweet to him. He from time to time spake of his being willing to leave the body and the world immediately, that day, that night, and that moment, if it was the will of God. He also was much in expressing his longings that the church of Christ on earth might flourish, and Christ's kingdom here might be advanced, notwithstanding he was about to leave the earth, and should not with his eyes behold the desirable event, nor be instrumental in promoting it. He said to me, one morning as I came into the room, My thoughts have been employed on the old dear theme, the prosperity of God's church on earth. As I waked out of sleep, I was led to cry for the pouring out of God's Spirit, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom, which the dear Redeemer did and suffered so much for. It is this that especially makes me long for it. He expressed much hope that a glorious advancement of Christ's kingdom was near at hand.

He once told me, that he had formerly longed for the outpouring of the Spirit of God, and the glorious times of the church, and hoped they were coming; and should have been willing to have lived to promote religion at that time, if that had been the will of God; but, says he, I am willing it should be as it is; I would not have the choice to make for myself for ten thousand worlds. He expressed, on his death bed, a full persuasion, that he should in heaven see the prosperity of the church on earth, and should rejoice with Christ therein; and the consideration of it seemed to be highly pleasing and satisfying to his mind.

He also still dwelt much on the great importance of the work of ministers of the gospel; and expressed his longings, that they might be filled with the Spirit of God; and manifested much desire to see some of the neighboring ministers, whom he had some acquaintance with, and whose sincere friendship he was confident of, that he might converse freely with them, on that subject, before he died. And it so hap-

pened, that he had opportunity with some of them according to his desire.

Another thing that lay much on his heart, and that he spake of, from time to time, in these near approaches of death, was the spiritual prosperity of his own congregation of Christian Indians in Newjersey: And when he spake of them, it was with peculiar tenderness; so that his speech would be presently interrupted and drowned with tears.

He also expressed much satisfaction in the disposals of Providence, with regard to the circumstances of his death; particularly that God had before his death given him the opportunity he had had in Boston, with so many considerable persons, ministers and others, to give in his testimony for God, and against false religion, and many mistakes that lead to it and promote it; and there to lay before pious and charitable gentlemen, the state of the Indians and their necessities, to so good effect; and that God had since given him opportunity to write to them further concerning these affairs; and to write other letters of importance, that he hoped might be of good influence with regard to the state of religion among the Indians, and elsewhere, after his death. He expressed great thankfulness to God for his mercy in these things. He also mentioned it as what he accounted a merciful circumstance of his death, that he should die here. And speaking of these things, he said, God had granted him all his desire; and signified, that now he could with the greater alacrity leave the world.]

Monday, September 28.....I was able to read, and make some few corrections in my private writings; but found I could not write, as I had done; I found myself sensibly declined in all respects. It has been only from a little while before noon, until about one or two o'clock, that I have been able to do any thing for some time past: Yet this refreshed my heart, that I could do any thing, either public or private, that I hoped was for God.

[This evening he was supposed to be dying: He thought so himself, and was thought so by those who were about him.... He seemed glad at the appearance of the near approach of

death. He was almost speechless, but his lips appeared to move; and one that sat very near him, heard him utter such expressions as these, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. O, why is his chariot so long in coming!* After he revived, he blamed himself for having been too eager to be gone. And in expressing what he found in the frame of his mind at that time, he said, he then found an inexpressibly sweet love to those that he looked upon as belonging to Christ, beyond almost all that ever he felt before; so that it seemed, to use his own words, like a little piece of heaven to have one of them near him..... And being asked whether he heard the prayer that was, at his desire, made with him; he said, yes, he heard every word, and had an uncommon sense of the things that were uttered in that prayer, and that every word reached his heart.

On the evening of the next day, viz. Tuesday, September 29, as he lay in his bed, he seemed to be in an extraordinary frame; his mind greatly engaged in sweet meditations concerning the prosperity of Zion: There being present here at that time two young gentlemen of his acquaintance, that were candidates for the ministry, he desired us all to unite in singing a psalm on that subject, even Zion's prosperity..... And on his desire we sung a part of the 102d Psalm. This seemed much to refresh and revive him, and gave him new strength; so that, though before he could scarcely speak at all, now he proceeded, with some freedom of speech, to give his dying counsels to those two young gentlemen forementioned, relating to their preparation for, and prosecution of that great work of the ministry they were designed for; and in particular, earnestly recommending to them frequent secret fasting and prayer: And enforced his counsel with regard to this, from his own experience of the great comfort and benefit of it; which, said he, I should not mention, were it not that I am a dying person. And after he had finished his counsel, he made a prayer, in the audience of us all; wherein, besides praying for this family, for his brethren, and those candidates for the ministry, and for his own congregation, he earnestly prayed for the reviving and flourishing of religion in the world.

Until now he had every day sat up part of the day; but after this he never rose from his bed.]

Wednesday, September 30....I was obliged to keep my bed the whole day, through weakness. However redeemed a little time, and with the help of my brother, read and corrected about a dozen pages in my M. S. giving an account of my conversion.

Thursday, October 1....I endeavored again to do something by way of writing, but soon found my powers of body and mind utterly fail. Felt not so sweetly as when I was able to do something that I hoped would do some good. In the evening, was discomposed and wholly delirious; but it was not long before God was pleased to give me some sleep, and fully composed my mind.* O, blessed be God for his great goodness to me, since I was so low at Mr. Broomfield's, on Thursday, June 18, last past. He has, except those few minutes, given me the clear exercise of my reason, and enabled me to labor much for him, in things both of a public and private nature; and, perhaps, to do more good than I should have done if I had been well; besides the comfortable influences of his blessed Spirit, with which he has been pleased to refresh my soul. May his name have all the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Friday, October 2....My soul was this day, at turns, sweetly set on God: I longed to be with him, that I might behold his glory. I felt sweetly disposed to commit all to him, even my dearest friends, my dearest flock, and my absent brother and all my concerns for time and eternity. O that his kingdom might come in the world; that they might all love and glorify him, for what he is in himself; and that the blessed Redeemer might *see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied*. O, *come Lord Jesus, come quickly*.† Amen.

* From this time forward, he had the free use of his reason until the day before his death; excepting that, at some times he appeared a little lost for a moment, at first waking out of sleep.

† Here ends his Diary: These are the last words that are written in it, either by his own hand, or by any other from his mouth.

[The next evening, we very much expected his brother John from Newjersey; it being about a week after the time that he proposed for his return when he went away. And though our expectations were still disappointed, yet Mr. Brainerd seemed to continue unmoved, in the same calm and peaceful frame, that he had before manifested; as having resigned all to God, and having done with his friends, and with all things below.

On the morning of the next day, being Lord's day, October 4, as my daughter Jerusha, who chiefly tended him, came into the room, he looked on her very pleasantly, and said, dear Jerusha, are you willing to part with me? I am quite willing to part with you: I am willing to part with all my friends; I am willing to part with my dear brother John, although I love him the best of any creature living: I have committed him and all my friends to God, and can leave them with God. Though if I thought I should not see you, and be happy with you in another world, I could not bear to part with you. But we shall spend an happy eternity together!

In the evening, as one came into the room with a Bible in her hand, he expressed himself thus; O, that dear book! That lovely book! I shall soon see it opened! The mysteries that are in it, and the mysteries of God's providence, will be all unfolded!

His distemper now very apparently preyed on his vitals in an extraordinary manner: Not by a sudden breaking of ulcers in his lungs, as at Boston, but by a constant discharge of purulent matter, in great quantities: So that what he brought up by expectoration, seemed to be as it were mouthfuls of almost clear pus; which was attended with very great inward pain and distress.

On Tuesday, October 6, he lay for a considerable time, as if he were dying. At which time, he was heard to utter, in broken whispers, such expressions as these: He will come, he will not tarry. I shall soon be in glory. I shall soon glorify God with the angels. But after some time he revived.

The next day, viz. Wednesday, October 7, his brother John arrived, being returned from Newjersey; where he had been

detained much longer than he intended, by a mortal sickness prevailing among the Christian Indians, and by some other things in their circumstances that made his stay with them necessary. Mr. Brainerd was affected and refreshed with seeing him, and appeared fully satisfied with the reasons of his delay; seeing the interest of religion and of the souls of his people required it.

The next day, Thursday, October 8, he was in great distress and agonies of body; and for the bigger part of the day, was much disordered as to the exercise of his reason. In the evening he was more composed, and had the use of his reason well; but the pain of his body continued and increased. He told me it was impossible for any to conceive of the distress he felt in his breast. He manifested much concern lest he should dishonor God, by impatience under his extreme agony; which was such, that he said, the thought of enduring it one minute longer was almost insupportable. He desired that others would be much in lifting up their hearts continually to God for him, that God would support him, and give him patience. He signified that he expected to die that night; but seemed to fear a longer delay: And the disposition of his mind with regard to death appeared still the same that it had been all along. And notwithstanding his bodily agonies, yet the interest of Zion lay still with great weight on his mind; as appeared by some considerable discourse he had that evening with the Rev. Mr. Billing, one of the neighboring ministers, who was then present, concerning the great importance of the work of the ministry, &c. And afterwards, when it was very late in the night, he had much very proper and profitable discourse with his brother John, concerning his congregation in Newjersey, and the interest of religion among the Indians. In the latter part of the night, his bodily distress seemed to rise to a greater height than ever; and he said to those then about him, that it was another thing to die, than people imagined; explaining himself to mean that they were not aware what bodily pain and anguish is undergone before death. Towards day, his eyes fixed: and he continued lying immoveable, until about six o'clock in the morning, and

then expired, on Friday, October 9, 1747, when his soul, as we may well conclude, was received by his dear Lord and Master, as an eminently faithful servant, into that state of perfection of holiness, and fruition of God, which he had so often and so ardently longed for; and was welcomed by the glorious assembly of the upper world, as one peculiarly fitted to join them in their blessed employments and enjoyments.

Much respect was shewn to his memory at his funeral; which was on the Monday following, after a sermon preached the same day, on that solemn occasion. His funeral was attended by eight of the neighboring ministers, and seventeen other gentlemen of liberal education, and a great concourse of people.]

REFLECTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

ON THE PRECEDING

MEMOIRS

OF

MR. BRAINERD.

I. WE have here an opportunity, as I apprehend, in a very lively instance, to see the nature of true religion; and the manner of its operation, when exemplified in a high degree and powerful exercise. Particularly it may be worthy to be observed,

1. How greatly Mr. Brainerd's religion differed from that of some pretenders to the experience of a clear work of saving conversion wrought on their hearts; who, depending and living on that, settle in a cold, careless and carnal frame of mind, and in a neglect of thorough, earnest religion, in the stated practice of it. Although his convictions and conversion were in all respects exceeding clear and very remarkable; yet how far was he from acting as though he thought he had got through his work, when once he had obtained comfort, and satisfaction of his interest in Christ, and title to heaven! On the contrary, that work on his heart, by which he was brought to this, was with him evidently but the beginning of his work, his first entering on the great business of religion and the service of God, his first setting out in his race. His work was not finished, nor his race ended, until life was ended; agreeable to frequent scripture representations of the Christian life. He continued pressing forward in a constant manner, forgetting the things that were behind, and reaching forth towards the things that were before. His pains and earnest-

ness in the business of religion were rather increased than diminished, after he had received comfort and satisfaction concerning the safety of his state. Those divine principles, which after this he was actuated by, of love to God, and longings and thirstings after holiness, seem to be more effectual to engage him to pains and activity in religion, than fear of hell had been before.

And as his conversion was not the end of his work, or of the course of his diligence and strivings in religion; so neither was it the end of the work of the Spirit of God on his heart: But on the contrary, the beginning of that work; the beginning of his spiritual discoveries, and holy views; the first dawning of the light, which thenceforward increased more and more; the beginning of his holy affections, his sorrow for sin, his love to God, his rejoicing in Christ Jesus, his longings after holiness. And the powerful operations of the Spirit of God in these things, were carried on, from the day of his conversion, in a continued course, to his dying day. His religious experiences, his admiration, his joy and praise, and flowing affections, did not only hold up to a considerable height for a few days, weeks or months, at first, while hope and comfort were new things with him; and then gradually dwindle and die away, until they came to almost nothing, and so leave him without any sensible or remarkable experience of spiritual discoveries, or holy and divine affections, for months together; as it is with many, who, after the newness of things is over, soon come to that pass, that it is again with them very much as it used to be before their supposed conversion, with respect to any present views of God's glory, of Christ's excellency, or of the beauty of divine things; and with respect to any present thirstings for God, or ardent outgoings of their souls after divine objects: But only now and then, they have a comfortable reflection on things they have met with in times past, and are something affected with them; and so rest easy, thinking all things are well; they have had a good clear work, and their state is safe, and they doubt not but they shall go to heaven when they die. How far otherwise was it with Mr. Brainerd, than it is with such persons! His experi-

ences, instead of dying away, were evidently of an increasing nature. His first love and other holy affections, even at the beginning, were very great; but after months and years, became much greater and more remarkable; and the spiritual exercises of his mind continued exceeding great, though not equally so at all times, yet usually so, without indulged remissness, and without habitual dwindling and dying away, even until his decease. They began in a time of general deadness all over the land, and were greatly increased in a time of general reviving of religion. And when religion decayed again, and a general deadness returned, his experiences were still kept up in their height, and his holy exercises maintained in their life and vigor; and so continued to be in a general course, wherever he was, and whatever his circumstances were, among English and Indians, in company, and alone, in towns and cities, and in the howling wilderness, in sickness and in health, living and dying. This is agreeable to scripture descriptions of true and right religion, and of the Christian life. The change that was wrought in him at his conversion, was agreeable to scripture representations of that change which is wrought in true conversion; a great change, and an abiding change, rendering him a new man, a new creature: Not only a change as to hope and comfort, and an apprehension of his own good estate; and a transient change, consisting in high flights of passing affections; but a change of nature, a change of the abiding habit and temper of his mind. Nor a partial change, merely in point of opinion, or outward reformation; much less a change from one error to another, or from one sin to another; but an universal change, both internal and external; as from corrupt and dangerous principles in religion, unto the belief of the truth, so from both the habits and ways of sin, unto universal holiness of heart and practice; from the power and service of Satan, unto God.

2. His religion did apparently and greatly differ from that of many high pretenders to religion, who are frequently actuated by vehement emotions of mind, and are carried on in a course of sudden and strong impressions, and supposed high

illuminations and immediate discoveries, and at the same time are persons of a virulent zeal, *not according to knowledge.*

His convictions, preceding his conversion, did not arise from any frightful impressions on his imagination, or any external images and ideas of fire and brimstone, a sword of vengeance drawn, a dark pit open, devils in terrible shapes, &c. strongly fixed in his mind. His sight of his own sinfulness did not consist in any imagination of a heap of loathsome material filthiness within him; nor did his sense of the hardness of his heart consist in any bodily feeling in his breast, something hard and heavy like a stone, nor in any imaginations whatever of such a nature.

His first discovery of God or Christ, at his conversion, was not any strong idea of any external glory or brightness, or majesty and beauty of countenance, or pleasant voice; nor was it any supposed, immediate manifestation of God's love to him in particular; nor any imagination of Christ's smiling face, arms open, or words immediately spoken to him, as by name, revealing Christ's love to him; either words of scripture, or any other; but a manifestation of God's glory, and the beauty of his nature, as supremely excellent in itself; powerfully drawing, and sweetly captivating his heart; bringing him to a hearty desire to exalt God, set him on the throne, and give him supreme honor and glory, as the king and sovereign of the universe; and also a new sense of the infinite wisdom, suitableness and excellency of the way of salvation by Christ; powerfully engaging his whole soul to embrace this way of salvation, and to delight in it. His first faith did not consist in believing that Christ loved him, and died for him, in particular. His first comfort was not from any secret suggestion of God's eternal love to him, or that God was reconciled to him, or intended great mercy for him; by any such texts as these, *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee. Fear not, I am thy God,* &c. or in any such way. On the contrary, when God's glory was first discovered to him, it was without any thought of salvation as his own. His first experience of the sanctifying and comforting power of God's Spirit did not begin in some bodily sensation, any pleasant warm

feeling in his breast, that he, as some others, called the feeling of the love of Christ in him, and being full of the Spirit. How exceeding far were his experiences, at his first conversion, from things of such a nature!

And if we look through the whole series of his experiences, from his conversion to his death, we shall find none of this kind.

Mr. Brainerd's religion was not selfish and mercenary: His love to God was primarily and principally for the supreme excellency of his own nature, and not built on a preconceived notion that God loved him, had received him into favor, and had done great things for him, or promised great things to him: So his joy was joy in God, and not in himself. We see by his Diary how, from time to time, through the course of his life, his soul was filled with ineffable sweetness and comfort. But what was the spring of this strong and abiding consolation? Not so much the consideration of the sure grounds he had to think that his state was good, that God had delivered him from hell, and that heaven was his; or any thoughts concerning his own distinguished happy and exalted circumstances, as a high favorite of heaven: But the sweet meditations and entertaining views he had of divine things without himself; the affecting considerations and lively ideas of God's infinite glory, his unchangeable blessedness, his sovereignty and universal dominion; together with the sweet exercises of love to God, giving himself up to him, abasing himself before him, denying himself for him, depending upon him, acting for his glory, diligently serving him; and the pleasing prospects or hopes he had of a future advancement of the kingdom of Christ, &c.

It appears plainly and abundantly all along, from his conversion to his death, that that beauty, that sort of good, which was the great object of the new sense of his mind, the new relish and appetite given him in conversion, and thenceforward maintained and increased in his heart, was holiness, conformity to God, living to God, and glorifying him. This was what drew his heart; this was the center of his soul; this was the ocean to which all the streams of his religious affec-

tions tended; this was the object that engaged his eager thirsting desires and earnest pursuits; He knew no true excellency or happiness but this: This was what he longed for most vehemently and constantly on earth; and this was with him the beauty and blessedness of heaven; which made him so much and so often to long for that world of glory; it was to be perfectly holy, and perfectly exercised in the holy employments of heaven; thus to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

His religious illuminations, affections and comfort, seemed to a great degree, to be attended with evangelical humiliation; consisting in a sense of his own utter insufficiency, despicableness and odiousness; with an answerable disposition and frame of heart. How deeply affected was he almost continually with his great defects in religion; with his vast distance from that spirituality and holy frame of mind that became him; with his ignorance, pride, deadness, unsteadiness, barrenness! He was not only affected with the remembrance of his former sinfulness, before his conversion, but with the sense of his present vileness and pollution. He was not only disposed to think meanly of himself as before God, and in comparison of him; but amongst men, and as compared with them: He was apt to think other saints better than he; yea, to look on himself as the meanest and least of saints; yea, very often, as the vilest and worst of mankind. And notwithstanding his great attainments in spiritual knowledge, yet we find there is scarce any thing that he is more frequently affected and abased with a sense of, than his ignorance.

How eminently did he appear to be of a meek and quiet spirit, resembling the lamblike, dovelike spirit of Jesus Christ! How full of love, meekness, quietness, forgiveness and mercy! His love was not merely a fondness and zeal for a party, but an universal benevolence; very often exercised in the most sensible and ardent love to his greatest opposers and enemies. His love and meekness were not a mere pretence, and outward profession and shew; but they were effectual things, manifested in expensive and painful deeds of love and kindness; and in a meek behavior; readily confessing faults

under the greatest trials, and humbling himself even at the feet of those from whom he supposed he had suffered most; and from time to time, very frequently praying for his enemies, abhorring the thoughts of bitterness or resentment towards them. I scarcely know where to look for any parallel instance of selfdenial, in these respects, in the present age. He was a person of great zeal; but how did he abhor a bitter zeal, and lament it where he saw it! And though he was once drawn into some degrees of it, by the force of prevailing example, as it were in his childhood; yet how did he go about with his heart bruised and broken in pieces for it all his life after!

Of how soft and tender a spirit was he! How far were his experiences, hopes, and joys from a tendency finally to stupify and harden him, to lessen convictions and tenderness of conscience, to cause him to be less affected with present and past sins, and less conscientious with respect to future sins, more easy in the neglect of duties that are troublesome and inconvenient, more slow and partial in complying with difficult commands, less apt to be alarmed at the appearance of his own defects and transgressions, more easily induced to a compliance with carnal appetites! On the contrary, how tender was his conscience! How apt was his heart to smite him! How easily and greatly was he alarmed at the appearance of moral evil! How great and constant was his jealousy over his own heart! How strict his care and watchfulness against sin! How deep and sensible were the wounds that sin made in his conscience! Those evils that are generally accounted small, were almost an insupportable burden to him; such as his inward deficiencies, his having no more love to God, finding within himself any slackness or dulness in religion, any unsteadiness, or wandering frame of mind, &c. How did the consideration of such things as these oppress and abase him, and fill him with inward shame and confusion! His love, and hope, though they were such as cast out a servile fear of hell, yet they were such as were attended with, and abundantly cherished and promoted a reverential filial fear of God, a dread of sin, and of God's holy displeasure. His joy seemed truly

to be a rejoicing with trembling. His assurance and comfort differed greatly from a false enthusiastic confidence and joy, in that it promoted and maintained mourning for sin. Holy mourning, with him, was not only the work of an hour or a day, at his first conversion; but sorrow for sin was like a wound constantly running: He was a mourner for sin all his days. He did not, after he received comfort and full satisfaction of the forgiveness of all his sins, and the safety of his state, forget his past sins, the sins of his youth, that were committed before his conversion; but the remembrance of them, from time to time, revived in his heart, with renewed grief. That in Ezek. xvi. 63, was evidently fulfilled in him, *That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame; when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done.* And how lastingly did the sins that he committed after his conversion, affect and break his heart! If he did any thing whereby he thought he had in any respect dishonored God, and wounded the interest of religion, he had never done with calling it to mind with sorrow and bitterness; though he was assured that God had forgiven it, yet he never forgave himself: His past sorrows and fears made no satisfaction with him; but still the wound renews, and bleeds afresh, again and again. And his present sins, that he daily found in himself, were an occasion of daily, sensible and deep sorrow of heart.

His religious affections and joys were not like those of some, who have rapture and mighty emotions from time to time in company; but have very little affection in retirement and secret places. Though he was of a very sociable temper, and loved the company of saints, and delighted very much in religious conversation and in social worship; yet his warmest affections, and their greatest effects on animal nature, and his sweetest joys, were in his closet-devotions, and solitary transactions between God and his own soul; as is very observable through his whole course, from his conversion to his death. He delighted greatly in sacred retirements; and loved to get quite away from all the world, to converse with God alone, in secret duties.

Mr. Brainerd's experiences and comforts were very far from being like those of some persons, which are attended with a spiritual satiety, and put an end to their religious desires and longings, at least to the edge and ardency of them; resting satisfied in their own attainments and comforts, as having obtained their chief end, which is to extinguish their fears of hell, and give them confidence of the favor of God..... How far were his religious affections, refreshments, and satisfactions, from such an operation and influence as this! On the contrary, how were they always attended with longings and thirstings after greater degrees of conformity to God! and the greater and sweeter his comforts were, the more vehement were his desires after holiness. For it is to be observed, that his longings were not so much after joyful discoveries of God's love, and clear views of his title to future advancement and eternal honors in heaven; as after more of present holiness, greater spirituality, an heart more engaged for God, to love and exalt and depend on him, an ability better to serve him, to do more for his glory, and to do all that he did with more of a regard to Christ as his righteousness and strength; and after the enlargement and advancement of Christ's kingdom in the earth. And his desires were not idle wishings and wouldings, but such as were powerful and effectual, to animate him to the earnest, eager pursuit of these things, with utmost diligence, and unfainting labor and selfdenial. His comforts never put an end to his seeking after God, and striving to obtain his grace; but on the contrary, greatly engaged and enlarged him therein.

His religion did not consist only in experience, without practice. All his inward illuminations, affections and comforts seemed to have a direct tendency to practise, and to issue in it; and this, not merely a practice negatively good, free from gross acts of irreligion and immorality: But a practice positively holy and Christian, in a serious, devout, humble, meek, merciful, charitable, and beneficent conversation; making the service of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, the great business of life, which he was devoted to, and pursued with the greatest earnestness and diligence to the end of his

days, through all trials. In him was to be seen the right way of being lively in religion. His liveliness in religion did not consist merely or mainly in his being lively with the tongue, but in deed; not in being forward in profession and outward shew, and abundant in declaring his own experiences; but chiefly in being active and abundant in the labors and duties of religion; not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, and serving his generation, according to the will of God.

It cannot be pretended, that the reason why he so much abhorred and condemned the notions and experiences of those whose first faith consists in believing that Christ is theirs, and that Christ died for them; without any previous experience of union of heart to him, for his excellency, as he is in himself, and not for his supposed love to them; and who judge of their interest in Christ, their justification, and God's love to them, not by their sanctification and the exercises and fruits of grace, but by a supposed immediate witness of the Spirit by inward suggestion; I say, it cannot be pretended, that the reason why he so much detested and condemned such opinions and experiences, was, that he was of a too legal spirit; either that he never was dead to the law, never experienced a thorough work of conviction, was never fully brought off from his own righteousness, and weaned from the old covenant, by a thorough legal humiliation; or that afterwards, he had no great degree of evangelical humiliation, not living in a deep sense of his own emptiness, wretchedness, poverty, and absolute dependence on the mere grace of God through Christ. For his convictions of sin, preceding his first consolations in Christ, were exceeding deep and thorough; his trouble and exercise of mind, by a sense of sin and misery, very great and long continued; and the light let into his mind at his conversion and in progressive sanctification, appears to have had its genuine humbling influence upon him, to have kept him low in his own eyes, not confiding in himself, but in Christ, *living by the faith of the Son of God*, and *looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus to eternal life*.

Nor can it be pretended, that the reason why he condemned those, and other things, which this sort of people call the very height of vital religion, and the power of godliness, was, that he was a dead Christian, and lived in the dark (as they express themselves) that his experiences, though they might be true, were not great; that he did not live near to God, had but a small acquaintance with him, and had but a dim sight of spiritual things. If any, after they have read the preceding account of Mr. Brainerd's life, will venture to pretend thus, they will only shew that they themselves are in the dark, and do indeed *put darkness for light, and light for darkness.*

II. The foregoing account of Mr. Brainerd's life may afford matter of conviction, that there is indeed such a thing as true experimental religion, arising from immediate divine influences, supernaturally enlightening and convincing the mind, and powerfully impressing, quickening, sanctifying and governing the heart; which religion is indeed an amiable thing, of happy tendency, and of no hurtful consequence to human society; notwithstanding there having been so many pretences and appearances of what is called experimental vital religion, that have proved to be nothing but vain, pernicious enthusiasm.

If any insist, that Mr. Brainerd's religion was enthusiasm, and nothing but a strange heat, and blind fervor of mind, arising from the strong fancies and dreams of a notional, whimsical brain; I would ask, if it be so, that such things as these are the fruits of enthusiasm, viz. a great degree of honesty and simplicity, sincere and earnest desires and endeavors to know and do whatever is right, and to avoid every thing that is wrong; an high degree of love to God, delight in the perfections of his nature, placing the happiness of life in him; not only in contemplating him, but in being active in pleasing and serving him; a firm and undoubting belief in the Messiah, as the Saviour of the world, the great Prophet of God, and King of God's church; together with great love to Him, delight and complacence in the way of salvation by Him, and longing for the enlargement of his kingdom; earnest desires that God may be glorified, and the Messiah's kingdom ad-

vanced, whatever instruments are made use of; uncommon resignation to the will of God, and that under vast trials; great and universal benevolence to mankind, reaching all sorts of persons without distinction, manifested in sweetness of speech and behavior, kind treatment, mercy, liberality, and earnest seeking the good of the souls and bodies of men; attended with extraordinary humility, meekness, forgiveness of injuries, and love to enemies; and a great abhorrence of a contrary spirit and practice; not only as appearing in others, but whereinsoever it had appeared in himself; causing the most bitter repentance, and brokenness of heart on account of any past instances of such a conduct: A modest, discreet and decent deportment, among superiors, inferiors and equals; a most diligent improvement of time, and earnest care to lose no part of it; great watchfulness against all sorts of sin, of heart, speech and action: And this example and these endeavors attended with most happy fruits, and blessed effects on others, in humanizing, civilizing, and wonderfully reforming and transforming some of the most brutish savages; idle, immoral, drunkards, murderers, gross idolaters, and wizards; bringing them to permanent sobriety, diligence, devotion, honesty, conscientiousness, and charity: And the foregoing amiable virtues and successful labors all ending at last in a marvellous peace, unmoveable stability, calmness and resignation, in the sensible approaches of death; with longing for the heavenly state; not only for the honors and circumstantial advantages of it, but above all for the moral perfections, and holy and blessed employments of it: And these things in a person indisputably of a good understanding and judgment: I say, if all these things are the fruits of enthusiasm, why should not enthusiasm be thought a desirable and excellent thing? For what can true religion, what can the best philosophy do more? If vapors and whimsey will bring men to the most thorough virtue, to the most benign and fruitful morality; and will maintain it through a course of life, attended with many trials, without affectation or selfexaltation, and with an earnest, constant bearing testimony against the wildness, the extravagances, the bitter zeal, assuming behavior, and separating spirit

of enthusiasts; and will do all this more effectually, than any thing else has ever done in any plain known instance that can be produced; if it be so, I say, what cause then has the world to prize and pray for this blessed whimsicalness, and these benign sort of vapors!

III. The preceding history serves to confirm those doctrines usually called the doctrines of grace. For if it be allowed that there is truth, substance, or value in the main of Mr. Brainerd's religion, it will undoubtedly follow, that those doctrines are divine: Since it is evident, that the whole of it, from beginning to end, is according to that scheme of things; all built on those apprehensions, notions, and views, that are produced and established in the mind by those doctrines. He was brought by doctrines of this kind to his awakening, and deep concern about things of a spiritual and eternal nature; and by these doctrines his convictions were maintained and carried on; and his conversion was evidently altogether agreeable to this scheme, but by no means agreeing with the contrary; and utterly inconsistent with the Arminian notion of conversion or repentance. His conversion was plainly founded in a clear strong conviction, and undoubting persuasion of the truth of those things appertaining to these doctrines, which Arminians most object against, and which his own mind had contended most about. And his conversion was no confirming and perfecting of moral principles and habits, by use and practice, and his own labor in an industrious disciplining himself, together with the concurring suggestions and conspiring aids of God's Spirit: But entirely a supernatural work, at once turning him from darkness to marvellous light, and from the power of sin to the dominion of divine and holy principles; an effect, in no regard produced by his strength or labor, or obtained by his virtue; and not accomplished until he was first brought to a full conviction that all his own virtue, strength, labors and endeavors, could never avail any thing to the producing or procuring this effect.

A very little while before, his mind was full of the same cavils against the doctrines of God's sovereign grace, which

are made by Arminians; and his heart full even of a raging opposition to them. And God was pleased to perform this good work in him just after a full end had been put to this caviling and opposition; after he was entirely convinced, that he was dead in sin, and was in the hands of God, as the absolutely sovereign, unobliged, sole disposer and author of true holiness. God's shewing him mercy at such a time, is a confirmation, that this was a preparation for mercy, ; and consequently, that these things which he was convinced of were true: While he opposed these things, he was the subject of no such mercy; though he so earnestly sought it, and prayed for it with so much painfulness, care and strictness in religion: But when once his opposition is fully subdued, and he is brought to submit to the truths, which he before had opposed, with full conviction, then the mercy he sought for is granted, with abundant light, great evidence, and exceeding joy, and he reaps the sweet fruits of it all his life after, and in the *valley of the shadow of death.*

In his conversion he was brought to see the glory of that way of salvation by Christ, that is taught in what are called the doctrines of grace; and thenceforward with unspeakable joy and complacence, to embrace and acquiesce in that way of salvation. He was in his conversion, in all respects, brought to those views, and that state of mind, which these doctrines shew to be necessary. And if his conversion was any real conversion, or any thing besides a mere whim, and if the religion of his life was any thing else but a series of freaks of a whimsical mind, then this one grand principle, on which depends the whole difference between Calvinists and Arminians, is undeniable, viz. that the grace or virtue of truly good men, not only differs from the virtue of others in degree, but even in nature and kind. If ever Mr. Brainerd was truly turned from sin to God at all, or ever became truly religious, none can reasonably doubt but that his conversion was at the time when he supposed it to be. The change he then experienced, was evidently the greatest moral change that ever he passed under; and he was then apparently first brought to that kind of religion, that remarkable new habit and temper of

mind, which he held all his life after. The narration shews it to be different, in nature and kind, from all that ever he was the subject of before. It was evidently wrought at once, without fitting and preparing his mind, by gradually convincing it more and more of the same truths, and bringing it nearer and nearer to such a temper: For it was soon after his mind had been remarkably full of blasphemy, and a vehement exercise of sensible enmity against God, and great opposition to those truths, which he was now brought with his whole soul to embrace, and rest in, as divine and glorious, and to place his happiness in the contemplation and improvement of. And he himself (who was surely best able to judge) declares, that the dispositions and affections, which were then given him, and thenceforward maintained in him, were most sensibly and certainly, perfectly different in their nature, from all that ever he was the subject of before, or that he ever had any conception of. This he ever stood to and was peremptory in (as what he certainly knew) even to his death. He must be looked upon as capable of judging; he had opportunity to know: He had practised a great deal of religion before, was exceeding strict and conscientious, and had continued so for a long time; had various religious affections, with which he often flattered himself, and sometimes pleased himself as being now in a good estate. And after he had those new experiences, that began in his conversion, they were continued to the end of his life; long enough for him thoroughly to observe their nature, and compare them with what had been before. Doubtless he was *compos mentis*; and was at least one of so good an understanding and judgment, as to be pretty well capable of discerning and comparing the things that passed in his own mind.

It is further observable, that his religion all along operated in such a manner as tended to confirm his mind in the doctrines of God's absolute sovereignty, man's universal and entire dependence on God's power and grace, &c. The more his religion prevailed in his heart, and the fuller he was of divine love, and of clear and delightful views of spiritual things, and the more his heart was engaged in God's service; the

more sensible he was of the certainty and the excellency and importance of these truths, and the more he was affected with them, and rejoiced in them. And he declares particularly that when he lay for a long while on the verge of the eternal world, often expecting to be in that world in a few minutes, yet at the same time enjoying great serenity of mind, and clearness of thought, and being most apparently in a peculiar manner at a distance from an enthusiastical frame, he at that time saw clearly the truth of those great doctrines of the gospel, which are justly stiled the doctrines of grace, and never felt himself so capable of demonstrating the truth of them.

So that it is very evident, Mr. Brainerd's religion was wholly correspondent to what is called the Calvinistical scheme, and was the effect of those doctrines applied to his heart: And certainly it cannot be denied, that the effect was good, unless we turn Atheists, or Deists. I would ask whether there be any such thing in reality, as Christian devotion? If there be, What is it? What is its nature? And what its just measure? Should it not be in a great degree? We read abundantly in scripture, of loving God with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the mind, and with all the strength, of delighting in God, of rejoicing in the Lord, rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory, the soul's magnifying the Lord, thirsting for God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, the soul's breaking for the longing it hath to God's judgments, praying to God with groanings that cannot be uttered, mourning for sin with a broken heart and contrite spirit, &c. How full is the book of Psalms, and other parts of scripture, of such things as these! Now wherein do these things, as expressed by, and appearing in Mr. Brainerd, either the things themselves, or their effects and fruits, differ from the scripture representations? These things he was brought to by that strange and wonderful transformation of the man, which he called his conversion. And does not this well agree with what is so often said, in Old Testament and New, concerning the giving of a new heart, creating a right spirit, a being renewed in the spirit of the mind, a being sanctified throughout, becoming a new creature, &c.? Now where is there to

be found an Arminian conversion or repentance, consisting in so great and admirable a change? Can the Arminians produce an instance, within this age, and so plainly within our reach and view, of such a reformation, such a transformation of a man, to scriptural devotion, heavenly mindedness, and true Christian morality, in one that before lived without these things, on the foot of their principles, and through the influence of their doctrines?

And here is worthy to be considered, not only the effect of Calvinistical doctrines, as they are called, on Mr. Brainerd himself, but also the effect of the same doctrines, as taught and inculcated by him, on others. It is abundantly pretended and asserted of late, that these doctrines tend to undermine the very foundations of all religion and morality, and to enervate and vacate all reasonable motives to the exercise and practice of them, and lay invincible stumbling blocks before infidels, to hinder their embracing Christianity; and that the contrary doctrines are the fruitful principles of virtue and goodness, set religion on its right basis, represent it in an amiable light, give its motives their full force, and recommend it to the reason and common sense of mankind. But where can they find an instance of so great and signal an effect of their doctrines, in bringing infidels, who were at such a distance from all that is civil, human, sober, rational, and Christian, and so full of inveterate prejudices against these things, to such a degree of humanity, civility, exercise of reason, selfdenial, and Christian virtue? Arminians place religion in morality: Let them bring an instance of their doctrines producing such a transformation of a people in point of morality. It is strange, if the all wise God so orders things in his providence, that reasonable and proper means, and his own means, which he himself has appointed, should in no known remarkable instance be instrumental to produce so good an effect; an effect so agreeable to his own word and mind, and that very effect for which he appointed these excellent means; that they should not be so successful as those means which are not his own, but very contrary to them, and of a contrary tendency; means that are in themselves very absurd, and tend to root all religion

and virtue out of the world, to promote and establish infidelity and to lay an insuperable stumbling block before pagans, to hinder their embracing the gospel: I say, if this be the true state of the case, it is certainly pretty wonderful, and an event worthy of some attention.

I know that many will be ready to say, it is too soon yet to glory in the work, that has been wrought among Mr. Brainerd's Indians; it is best to wait and see the final event; it may be, all will come to nothing by and by: To which I answer, not to insist that it will not follow, according to Arminian principles, they are not now true Christians, really pious and godly, though they should fall away and come to nothing, that I never supposed, every one of those Indians, who in profession renounced their Heathenism and visibly embraced Christianity, and have had some appearances of piety, will finally prove true converts: If two thirds, or indeed one half of them, as great a proportion as there is in the parable of the ten virgins, should persevere; it will be sufficient to shew the work wrought among them, to have been truly admirable and glorious. But so much of permanence of their religion has already appeared, as shews it to be something else besides an Indian humor or good mood, or any transient effect in the conceits, notions, and affections of these ignorant people, excited at a particular turn, by artful management. For it is now more than three years ago, that this work began among them, and a remarkable change appeared in many of them; since which time the number of visible converts has greatly increased: And by repeated accounts, from several hands, they still generally persevere in diligent religion and strict virtue. I think worthy to be here inserted, a letter from a young gentleman, a candidate for the ministry, one of those appointed by the honorable Commissioners in Boston, as Missionaries to the Heathen of the Six Nations, so called; who by their order, dwelt with Mr. John Brainerd, among these Christian Indians, in order to their being prepared for the business of their mission. The letter was written from thence to his parents here in Northampton, and is as follows.

Bethel, in Newjersey, Jan. 14, 1747....8.

HONORED AND DEAR PARENTS,

AFTER a long and uncomfortable journey, by reason of bad weather, I arrived at Mr. Brainerd's the sixth of this instant; where I design to stay this winter: And as yet upon many accounts, am well satisfied with my coming hither. The state and circumstances of the Indians, spiritual and temporal, much exceed what I expected. I have endeavored to acquaint myself with the state of the Indians, in general, with particular persons, and with the school; as much as the short time I have been here would admit of. And notwithstanding my expectations were very much raised, from Mr. David Brainerd's Journal, and from particular informations from him; yet I must confess, that in many respects, they were not equal to that which now appears to me to be true, concerning the glorious work of divine grace amongst the Indians.

The evening after I came to town, I had opportunity to see the Indians together, whilst the Rev. Mr. Arthur preached to them; at which time there appeared a very general and uncommon seriousness and solemnity in the congregation: And this appeared to me to be the effect of an inward sense of the importance of divine truths, and not because they were hearing a stranger; which was abundantly confirmed to me the next sabbath, when there was the same devout attendance on divine service, and a surprising solemnity appearing in the performance of each part of divine worship. And some who are hopefully true Christians, appear to have been at that time much enlivened and comforted; not from any observable commotions then, but from conversation afterwards: And others seemed to be under pressing concern for their souls. I have endeavored to acquaint myself with particular persons; many of whom seem to be very humble and growing Christians; although some of them, as I am informed, were before their conversion most monstrously wicked.

Religious conversation seems to be very pleasing and delightful to many, and especially that which relates to the ex-

ercises of the heart. And many here do not seem to be real Christians only, but growing Christians also; as well in doctrinal, as experimental knowledge. Besides my conversation with particular persons, I have had opportunity to attend upon one of Mr. Brainerd's catechetical lectures; where I was surprised at their readiness in answering questions which they had not been used to; although Mr. Brainerd complained much of their uncommon deficiency. It is surprising, to see this people, who, not long since were led captive by Satan at his will, and living in the practice of all manner of abominations, without the least sense even of moral honesty, yet now living soberly and regularly, and not seeking every man his own, but every man, in some sense his neighbor's good; and to see those, who but a little while past, knew nothing of the true God, now worshipping him in a solemn and devout manner; not only in public, but in their families, and in secret; which is manifestly the case; it being a difficult thing to walk out in the woods in the morning, without disturbing persons at their secret devotion. And it seems wonderful, that this should be the case, not only with adult persons, but with children also. It is observable here, that many children, if not the children in general, retire into secret places to pray. And as far as at present I can judge, this is not the effect of custom and fashion, but of real seriousness and thoughtfulness about their souls.

I have frequently gone into the school, and have spent considerable time there amongst the children; and have been surprised to see, not only their diligent attendance upon the business of the school, but also the proficiency they have made in it, in reading and writing, and in their catechisms of divers sorts. It seems to be as pleasing and as natural to these children to have their books in their hands, as it does for many others to be at play. I have gone into an house where there has been a number of children accidentally gathered together, and observed, that every one had his book in his hand, and was diligently studying of it. There is to the number of about thirty of these children, who can answer to all the questions in the assembly's catechism; and the bigger part of them are

able to do it, with the proofs, to the fourth commandment. I wish there were many such schools: I confess that I never was acquainted with such an one, in many respects. O that what God has done here, may prove to be the beginning of a far more glorious and extensive work of grace among the Heathen. I am your obedient and dutiful son,

JOB STRONG.

P. S. Since the date of this, I have had opportunity to attend upon another of Mr. Brainerd's catechetical lectures; and truly I was convinced, that Mr. Brainerd did not complain before of his people's defects in answering to questions proposed, without reason: For although their answers at that time exceeded my expectations very much; yet their performances at this lecture very much exceeded them.

IV. Is there not much in the preceding memoirs of Mr. Brainerd to teach and excite to duty us, who are called to the work of the ministry, and all that are candidates for this great work? What a deep sense did he seem to have of the greatness and importance of that work, and with what weight did it lie on his mind! How sensible was he of his own insufficiency for this work; and how great was his dependence on God's sufficiency! How solicitous, that he might be fitted for it! And to this end, how much time did he spend in prayer and fasting, as well as reading and meditation; giving himself to these things! How did he dedicate his whole life, all his powers and talents to God; and forsake and renounce the world, with all its pleasing and enamouring enjoyments, that he might be wholly at liberty, to serve Christ in this work; and to please him who had chosen him to be a soldier, under the *Captain of our salvation!* With what solicitude, solemnity, and diligence, did he devote himself to God our Saviour, and seek his presence and blessing in secret, at the time of his ordination! And how did his whole heart appear to be constantly engaged, his whole time employed, and his whole strength spent in the business he then solemnly undertook, and was publicly set apart to! And his history shews us the right

way to success in the work of the ministry. He sought it, as a resolute soldier seeks victory, in a siege or battle; or as a man that runs a race, for a great prize. Animated with love to Christ and souls, how did he labor always fervently, not only in word and doctrine, in public and private, but in prayers day and night, wrestling with God in secret, and travailing in birth, with unutterable groans and agonies, until Christ was formed in the hearts of the people to whom he was sent! How did he thirst for a blessing on his ministry; and *watch for souls, as one that must give account!* How did he *go forth in the strength of the Lord God;* seeking and depending on a special influence of the Spirit to assist and succeed him! And what was the happy fruit at last, though after long waiting, and many dark and discouraging appearances! Like a true son of Jacob, he persevered in wrestling, through all the darkness of the night, until the breaking of the day.

And his example of laboring, praying, denying himself, and enduring hardness, with unfainting resolution and patience, and his faithful, vigilant, and prudent conduct in many other respects, which it would be too long now particularly to recite, may afford instruction to missionaries in particular.

V. The foregoing account of Mr. Brainerd's life may afford instruction to Christians in general; as it shews, in many respects, the right way of practising religion, in order to obtain the ends of it, and receive the benefits of it; or how Christians should *run the race set before them*, if they would not run in vain, or run as uncertainly, but would honor God in the world, adorn their profession, be serviceable to mankind, have the comforts of religion while they live, be free from disquieting doubts and dark apprehensions about the state of their souls; enjoy peace in the approaches of death, and *finish their course with joy.* In general, he much recommended, for this purpose, the redemption of time, great diligence in the business of the Christian life, watchfulness, &c. And he very remarkably exemplified these things.

But particularly, his example and success with regard to one duty in special, may be of great use to both ministers and private Christians; I mean the duty of secret fasting. The

reader has seen, how much Mr. Brainerd recommends this duty, and how frequently he exercised himself in it; nor can it well have escaped observation, how much he was owned and blessed in it, and of what great benefit it evidently was to his soul. Among all the many days he spent in secret fasting and prayer, that he gives an account of in his Diary, there is scarce an instance of one, but what was either attended or soon followed with apparent success, and a remarkable blessing, in special incomes and consolations of God's Spirit; and very often, before the day was ended. But it must be observed, that when he set about this duty, he did it in good earnest; stirring up himself to take hold of God, and continuing *instant in prayer*, with much of the spirit of Jacob, who said to the angel, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*

VI. There is much in the preceding account to excite and encourage God's people to earnest prayers and endeavors for the advancement and enlargement of the kingdom of Christ in the world. Mr. Brainerd gave us an excellent example in this respect. He sought the prosperity of Zion with all his might. He preferred Jerusalem above his chief joy. How did his soul long for it, and pant after it! And how earnestly and often did he wrestle with God for it! And how far did he, in these desires and prayers, seem to be carried beyond all private and selfish views! Being animated by a pure love to Christ, an earnest desire of his glory, and a disinterested affection to the souls of mankind.

As there is much in Mr. Brainerd's life to encourage Christians to seek the advancement of Christ's kingdom, in general; so there is, in particular, to pray for the conversion of the Indians on this continent, and to exert themselves in the use of proper means for its accomplishment. For it appears, that he, in his unutterable longings and wrestlings of soul for the flourishing of religion, had his mind peculiarly intent on the conversion and salvation of these people, and his heart more especially engaged in prayer for them. And if we consider the degree and manner in which he, from time to time, sought and hoped for an extensive work of grace among them, I think we have reason to hope, that the wonderful things,

which God wrought among them by him, are but a forerunner of something yet much more glorious and extensive of that kind; and this may justly be an encouragement, to well disposed, charitable persons, to *honor the Lord with their substance*, by contributing, as they are able, to promote the spreading of the gospel among them; and this also may incite and encourage gentlemen who are incorporated, and intrusted with the care and disposal of those liberal benefactions, which have already been made by pious persons, to that end; and likewise the missionaries themselves, that are or may be employed; and it may be of direction unto both, as to the proper qualifications of missionaries, and the proper measures to be taken in order to their success.

One thing in particular, I would take occasion from the foregoing history to mention and propose to the consideration of such as have the care of providing and sending missionaries among savages; viz. whether it would not ordinarily be best to send two together? It is pretty manifest, that Mr. Brainerd's going, as he did, alone into the howling wilderness, was one great occasion of such a prevailing of melancholy on his mind; which was his greatest disadvantage. He was much in speaking of it himself, when he was here in his dying state; and expressed himself, to this purpose, that none could conceive of the disadvantage a missionary in such circumstances was under, by being alone; especially as it exposed him to discouragement and melancholy: And spoke of the wisdom of Christ in sending forth his disciples by two and two; and left it as his dying advice to his brother, never to go to Susquehannah, to travel about in that remote wilderness, to preach to the Indians there, as he had often done, without the company of a fellow missionary.

VII. One thing more may not be unprofitably observed in the preceding account of Mr. Brainerd; and that is the special and remarkable disposal of Divine Providence, with regard to the circumstances of his last sickness and death.

Though he had been long infirm, his constitution being much broken by his fatigues and hardships; and though he was often brought very low by illness, before he left Kaunau-

meek, and also while he lived at the Forks of Delaware; yet his life was preserved until he had seen that which he had so long and greatly desired and sought, a glorious work of grace among the Indians, and had received the wished for blessing of God on his labors. Though as it were in deaths oft, yet he lived to behold the happy fruits of the long continued travail of his soul, and labor of his body, in the wonderful conversion of many of the Heathen, and the happy effect of it in the great change of their conversation, with many circumstances which afforded a fair prospect of the continuance of God's blessing upon them: Thus he did not depart, *until his eyes had seen God's salvation.*

Though in that winter that he lay sick at Mr. Dickinson's in Elizabethtown, he continued for a long time in an extremely low state, so that his life was almost despaired of, and his state was sometimes, such that it was hardly expected he would live a day to an end; yet his life was spared a while longer; he lived to see his brother arrived in Newjersey, being come to succeed him in the care of his Indians; and he himself had opportunity to assist in his examination and introduction into his business; and to commit the conduct of his dear people to one whom he well knew, and could put confidence in, and use freedom with, in giving him particular instructions and charges, and under whose care he could leave his congregation with great cheerfulness.

The providence of God was remarkable in so ordering it, that before his death he should take a journey into Newengland, and go to Boston: Which was, in many respects, of very great and happy consequence to the interest of religion, and especially among his own people. By this means, as has been observed, he was brought into acquaintance with many persons of note and influence, ministers and others, belonging both to the town and various parts of the country; and had opportunity, under the best advantages, to bear a testimony for God and true religion, and against those false appearances of it that have proved most pernicious to the interests of Christ's kingdom in the land. And the providence of God is particularly observable in this circumstance of the testimony

he there bore for true religion, viz. that he there was brought so near the grave, and continued for so long a time on the very brink of eternity; and from time to time looked on himself, and was looked on by others, as just leaving the world; and that in these circumstances he should be so particularly directed and assisted in his thoughts and views of religion, to distinguish between the true and the false, with such clearness and evidence; and that after this he should be unexpectedly and surprisingly restored and strengthened, so far as to be able to converse freely; and have such opportunity, and special occasions to declare the sentiments he had in these, which were, to human apprehension, his dying circumstances; and to bear his testimony concerning the nature of true religion, and concerning the mischievous tendency of its most prevalent counterfeits and false appearances; as things he had a special, clear, distinct view of at that time, when he expected in a few minutes to be in eternity; and the certainty and importance of which were then, in a peculiar manner, impressed on his mind.

Among the happy consequences of his going to Boston, were those liberal benefactions that have been mentioned, which were made by pious disposed persons, for the maintaining and promoting the interest of religion among his people: And also the meeting of a number of gentlemen in Boston, of note and ability, to consult upon measures for that purpose; who were excited, by their acquaintance and conversation with Mr. Brainerd, and by the account of the great things God had wrought by his ministry, to unite themselves, that by their joint endeavors and contributions they might promote the kingdom of Christ, and the spiritual good of their fellow creatures, among the Indians in Newjersey, and elsewhere.

The providence of God was observable in his going to Boston at a time when not only the honorable commissioners were seeking missionaries to the Six Nations; but just after his Journal, which gives an account of his labors and success among the Indians, had been received and spread in Boston: Whereby his name was known, and the minds of serious peo-

ple were well prepared to receive his person, and the testimony he there gave for God; to exert themselves for the upholding and promoting the interest of religion in his congregation, and amongst the Indians elsewhere; and to regard his judgment concerning the qualifications of missionaries, &c. If he had gone there the fall before, when he had intended to have made his journey into Newengland, but was prevented by a sudden great increase of his illness, it would not have been likely to have been in any measure to so good effect: And also if he had not been unexpectedly detained in Boston: For when he went from my house, he intended to make but a very short stay there: But Divine Providence, by his being brought so low there, detained him long; thereby to make way for the fulfilling its own gracious designs.

The providence of God was remarkable in so ordering, that although he was brought so very near the grave in Boston, that it was not in the least expected he would ever come alive out of his chamber; yet he wonderfully revived, and was preserved several months longer: So that he had opportunity to see, and fully to converse with both his younger brethren before he died; which was a thing he greatly desired; and especially to see his brother John, with whom was left the care of his congregation; that he might by him be fully informed of their state, and might leave with him such instructions and directions as were requisite in order to their spiritual welfare, and to send to them his dying charges and counsels. And he had also an opportunity, by means of this suspension of his death, to find and recommend a couple of persons fit to be employed as missionaries to the Six Nations, as had been desired of him.

Although it was the pleasure of a sovereign God, that he should be taken away from his congregation, the people that he had begotten through the gospel, who were so dear to him; yet it was granted to him, that before he died he should see them well provided for, every way: He saw them provided for with one to instruct them, and take care of their souls; his own brother, whom he could confide in: He saw a good foundation laid for the support of the school among them;

those things that before were wanting in order to it, being supplied: And he had the prospect of a charitable society being established, of able and well disposed persons, who seem to make the spiritual interest of his congregation their own; whereby he had a comfortable view of their being well provided for, for the future: And he had also opportunity to leave all his dying charges with his successor in the pastoral care of his people, and by him to send his dying counsels to them. Thus God granted him to see all things happily settled, or in a hopeful way of being so, before his death, with respect to his dear people. And whereas not only his own congregation, but the souls of the Indians in North America in general, were very dear to him, and he had greatly set his heart on the propagating and extending the kingdom of Christ among them; God was pleased to grant to him, however it was his will that he should be taken away, and so should not be the immediate instrument of their instruction and conversion, yet that before his death, he should see unexpected extraordinary provision made for this also. And it is remarkable, that God not only allowed him to see such provision made for the maintaining the interest of religion among his own people, and the propagation of it elsewhere; but honored him by making him the means or occasion of it. So that it is very probable, however Mr. Brainerd, during the last four months of his life, was ordinarily in an extremely weak and low state, very often scarcely able to speak; yet that he was made the instrument or means of much more good in that space of time, than he would have been if he had been well, and in full strength of body. Thus God's power was manifested in his weakness, and the life of Christ was manifested in his mortal flesh.

Another thing wherein appears the merciful disposal of Providence with respect to his death, was, that he did not die in the wilderness, among the savages at Kaunaumeek, or the Forks of Delaware, or at Susquehannah; but in a place where his dying behavior and speeches might be observed and remembered, and some account given of them for the benefit

of survivors; and also where care might be taken of him in his sickness, and proper honors done him at his death.

The providence of God is also worthy of remark, in so overruling and ordering the matter, that he did not finally leave absolute orders for the entire suppressing of his private papers; as he had intended and fully resolved, insomuch that all the importunity of his friends could scarce restrain him from doing it, when sick at Boston. And one thing relating to this is peculiarly remarkable, viz. that his brother, a little before his death, should come from the Jerseys unexpected, and bring his Diary to him, though he had received no such order. Mr. Brainerd himself, as was before observed, was much in taking notice, when near his end, of the merciful circumstances of his death; and said, from time to time, that God had granted him all his desire.

And I would not conclude my observations on the merciful circumstances of Mr. Brainerd's death, without acknowledging with thankfulness, the gracious dispensation of Providence to me and my family, in so ordering, that he (though the ordinary place of his abode was more than two hundred miles distant) should be cast hither, to my house, in his last sickness, and should die here: So that we had opportunity for much acquaintance and conversation with him, and to shew him kindness in such circumstances, and to see his dying behavior, to hear his dying speeches, to receive his dying counsels, and to have the benefit of his dying prayers. May God in infinite mercy grant that we may ever retain a proper remembrance of these things, and make a due improvement of the advantages we have had in these respects! The Lord grant also, that the foregoing account of Mr. Brainerd's life and death may be for the great spiritual benefit of all that shall read it, and prove a happy means of promoting the revival of true religion in these parts of the world.

END OF VOLUME III.